Oct. 10, 1988

THE NEW YORKER

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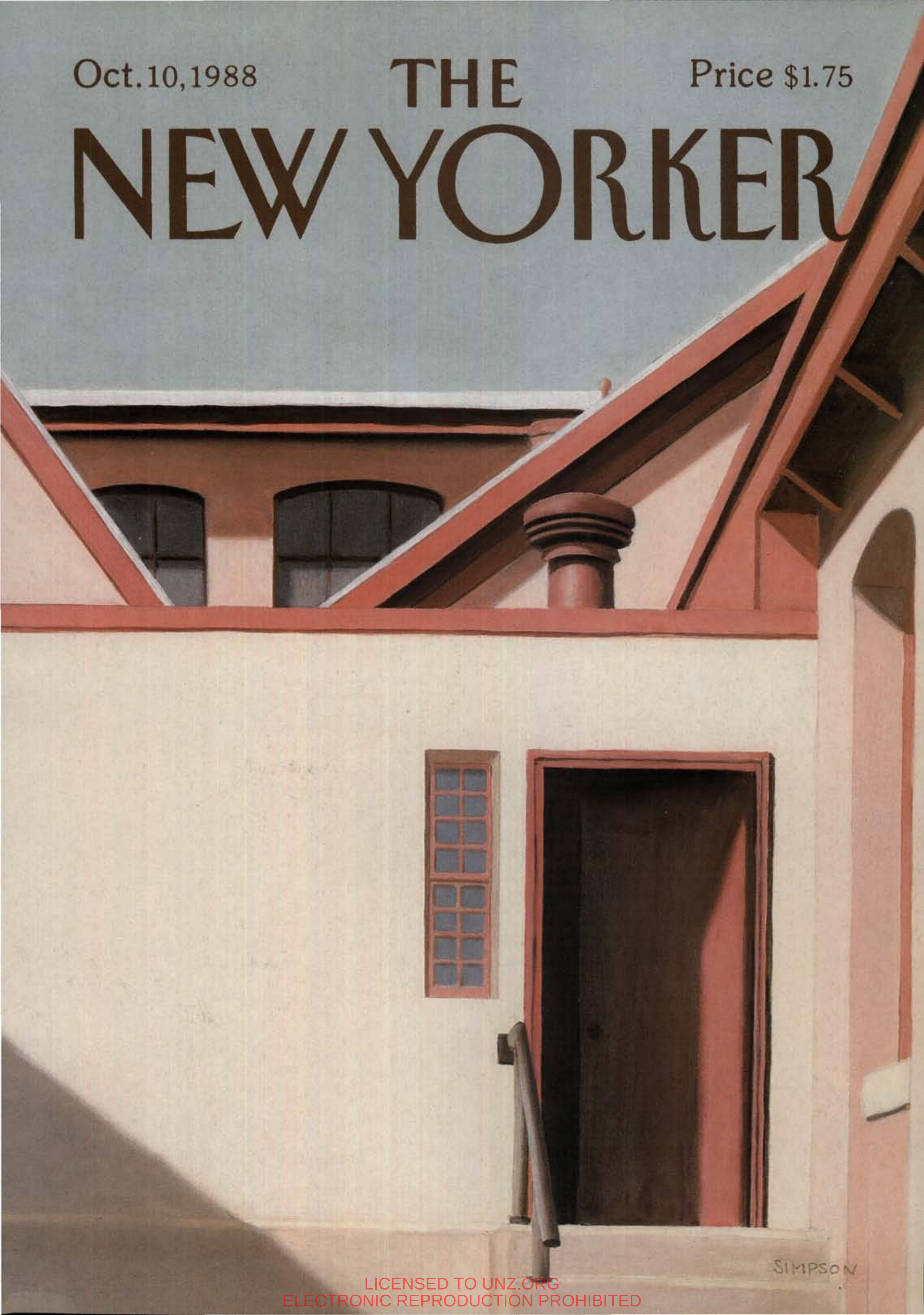

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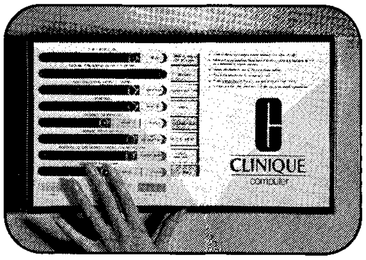

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

Ain't Misbehavin'—A revival, after ten years, of this celebration of the music and the comic spirit of Fats Waller, in all its beauty and variety, as conceived and directed by Richard Maltby, Jr. The members of the original company are present and just as dynamic as they were the first time around. They are Nell Carter, Andre De Shields, Armelia McQueen, Ken Page, and Charlaine Woodard. The invaluable (and protean) Luther Henderson, conductor and arranger, again presides at the piano. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/5/88.) (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 3.)

Blues in the Night—Carol Woods, Brenda Pressley, Leilani Jones, and Lawrence Hamilton appear as residents of a cheap hotel, presumably in Chicago, in this recital of blues and popular songs, many of them from the thirties. All the singers are good, Miss Woods especially so. (9/26/88) (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Checkmates—Ron Milner's "domestic comedy," about an older couple who lease the apartment above them to a recently married young couple, should be more entertaining than it is. There are some funny moments, though, and the performances are distinguished. The actors are Ruby Dee and Paul Winfield (downstairs) and Denzel Washington and Marsha Jackson (upstairs). Woodie King, Jr., directed. (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Circle Repertory Company—**reckless,** a new play by Craig Lucas, about a woman whose husband has taken a contract out on her life, has slightly absurdist tendencies and pretensions but nothing to say, ultimately. Only sprightly performances, from a cast led by Robin Bartlett, keep it from being unwatchable. (Reviewed in this issue.) (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

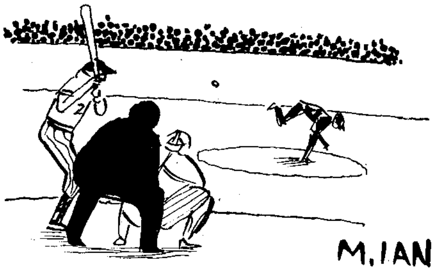
Equity Library Theatre—A revival of **the male animal,** a 1940 comedy by James Thurber and Elliott Nugent, is the first in this season's series of eight productions. (103rd St. and Riverside Dr. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2:30. For information about tickets, for which contributions are requested, call 663-2028. Closes Sunday, Oct. 16.)

Forbidden Broadway 1988—The funniest show in town is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way, as conceived by Gerard Alessandrini, who directed it and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. The performers are Toni DiBuono, Roxie Lucas, David B. McDonald, and Michael McGrath—inspired mimics all. (9/26/88) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8:30; Saturdays at 7:30 and 10:30; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3:30.)

Godspell—A revival of the 1971 musical by Stephen Schwartz and John-Michael Tebelak. (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

The Grandma Plays—Renée Taylor and Elzbieta Czyzewska in a comedy by Todd Graff. (Vineyard Theatre, 309 E. 26th St. 683-0696. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, Oct. 16.)

Light Opera of Manhattan—Presenting Gilbert and Sullivan's **h.m.s. pinafore.** (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Saturdays and Sundays at 3:30. Closes Sunday, Oct. 16.)



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M. Butterfly—David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play is based on an actual case. A French diplomat takes as his mistress a star of the Beijing Opera, and some twenty years later—when they are both charged with being spies—discovers that "she" is a he. David Dukes is the diplomat; B. D. Wong is exceptional as his lover. Lori Tan Chinn and George N. Martin give them sound support. (4/4/88) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Michael Feinstein in Concert: Isn't It Romantic—A program of popular songs of the twenties, thirties, and forties. Feinstein's knowledge of the genre is exhaustive: he knows all the old songs and their intros, so the show becomes a meeting place for the timeless and the charmingly dated. (5/9/88) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6277. Tuesdays, except Oct. 4, through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

A Murder of Crows—Kim Hunter and Michael Higgins in a new play by Ed Graczyk. (South Street Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Wednesdays through Sundays at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, Oct. 16.)

Negro Ensemble Company—Presenting **from the mississippi delta,** an ingenious play by Endesha Ida Mae Holland that, in a kind of dramatic collage, traces the life of a young woman from the fifties to the eighties. Brenda Denmark, Sandra McClain, and Gwen Roberts-Frost, three mettlesome actresses, portray her and an assortment of other characters, male and female. (9/5/88) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545. Wednesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 8:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 3 and Sundays at 2:30. Closes Sunday, Oct. 23.)

Paul Robeson—This stirring production of Phillip Hayes Dean's biographical drama was seen in August at the South Street Theatre and has now moved to Broadway. Avery Brooks, the sole actor present, gives a performance that far transcends impersonation, and Ernie Scott is a strong presence at the piano. Herb Downer substitutes for Mr. Brooks at the Wednesday and Saturday matinées. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, except Oct. 5, and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Romance/Romance—A pair of charming one-act musicals, with Barry Williams and Alison Fraser in the leading roles. Barry Harman wrote the clever books and lyrics, and Keith Herrmann wrote the engaging scores. Mr. Harman directed. (5/16/88) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Speed-the-Plow—David Mamet's satire on Hollywood is just as scathing, just as acute as his "Glengarry Glen Ross," and even funnier, if that can be imagined. With David Rasche, Bob Balaban, and Felicity Huffman; directed by Gregory Mosher. (5/16/88) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6277. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

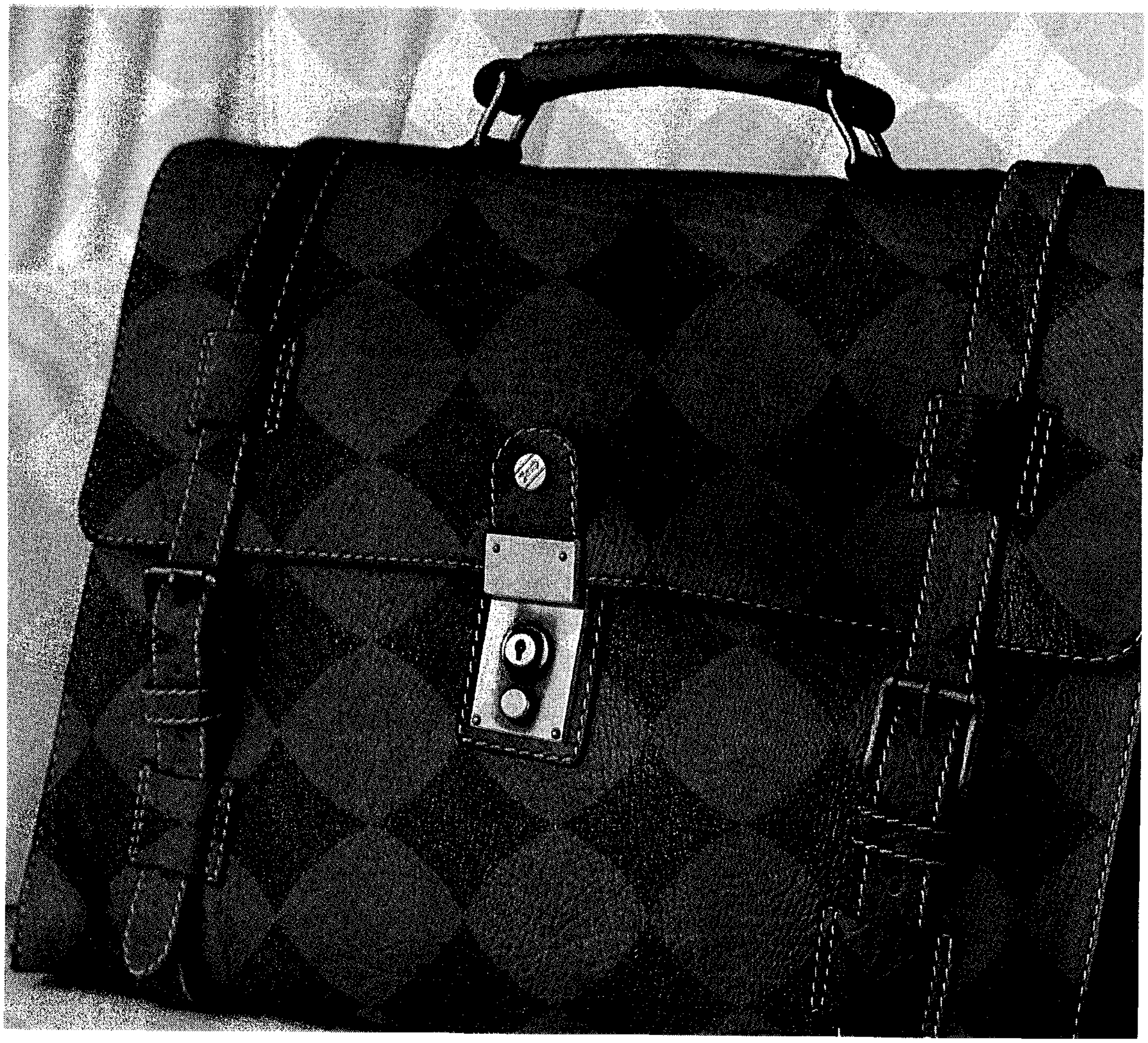
Suds—This uninspired musical, set in a laundromat, uses the pop music of the early sixties to cash in on the nostalgia boom. There's probably enough here to amuse a sophisticated ten-year-old, but kids savvy enough to enjoy the music might leave the show feeling they could have done better by the material themselves. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Stage Left at Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

The Taffetas—A revue of songs from the early fifties. Four female singers reprise the hits of Rosemary Clooney, Jo Stafford, the Lennon Sisters, and others. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Ten Percent Revue—A musical revue by Tom Wilson Weinberg about gay life. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 4.)

Young Playwrights Festival—The seventh edition of this annual event is the best of the lot. The three prize-winning dramatists whose work is here produced—Robert Kerr, Jonathan Marc Sherman, and Eric Ziegenhagen—are still in their teens, and their one-acters show considerably more than just promise. (10/3/88) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Tuesday through Saturday at 8. Matinée Saturday at 3. Closes Saturday, Oct. 8.)

Long Runs—**anything goes:** This exuberant revival is primarily a celebration of Cole Porter himself. The company, which includes Bill McCutcheon, Howard McGillin, Patti LuPone, and Kathleen Mahony-Bennett, does more than justice to the words and score. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **burn this:** A play by Lanford Wilson, with Scott Glenn as a foulmouthed restaurant manager who woos and wins his dead brother's dancing partner. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **cats:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to the sets and costumes by John Napier. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **a chorus line:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **driving miss daisy:** Frances Sternhagen and Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **the fantasticks:** The longest long run recently turned twenty-eight. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **42nd street:** A musical based on the old Warner Brothers movie, and by no means an improvement on it. Directed and choreographed by the late Gower Champion. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 398-0280. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8:15. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:15, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **frankie and johnny in the clair de lune:** Bonnie Franklin and Tony Musante in Terrence McNally's enchanting comedy about sex and the sudden onset of love in an apartment on Tenth Avenue. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE–Cont'd

Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Wednesdays at 2:30 and Sundays at 3.) . . . **INTO THE WOODS:** This musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine is an attempt to show what lurks beneath the surface of conventional fairy tales. The songs are beautiful or funny—sometimes both. Directed by Mr. Lapine. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-6363. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **JACKIE MASON'S "THE WORLD ACCORDING TO ME!":** The comedian's one-man show. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.) . . . **ME AND MY GIRL:** An infelicitously rehabilitated British musical out of the thirties, with Jim Dale. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Tim Shew and Norman Large star in the musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel, but the real standouts of the production are the settings, by John Napier, and the lighting, by David Hersey. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, except Oct. 5, and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3. Special performance Sunday, Oct. 9, at 7.) . . . **OIL CITY SYMPHONY:** Mike Craver, Mark Hardwick, Michelle Horman, and Mary Murfitt, gifted and sophisticated singers and instrumentalists, appear as a quartet of dedicated hicks reuniting at their small-town high school in this very funny musical. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **SARAFINA!:** *This South African musical, an explo*sion of talent, was conceived, written, and directed by Mbongeni Ngema, who also, with Hugh Masekela, composed and arranged the score. The acting, dancing, and singing, to a local form of popular music called Mbaqanga, are a wonder. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **A SHAYNA MAIDEL:** A well-wrought and deeply moving play by Barbara Lebow about a Polish-Jewish family torn apart by the events of the Hitler era. The production is beautifully directed by Mary B. Robinson. Bring lots of Kleenex to this one, but expect to leave uplifted. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **STARLIGHT EXPRESS:** A bore on roller skates. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 6 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

MISCELLANY

Moscow Circus—Acrobats, clowns, trapeze artists, and skateboarding bears. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 757-3100. Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at 8; Wednesday at 2:30 and 8; and Saturday and Sunday at 11, 2:30, and 7:30. Closes Sunday, Oct. 9.)

Calvin Trillin's Uncle Sam—An entertaining solo turn by Mr. Trillin, whose only props are maps of this country but whose topics range far and wide.

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(Reviewed in this issue.) (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074. Wednesday through Saturday at 8. Matinée Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, Oct. 9.)

DANCE

Martha Graham Dance Company—Opening performances of a three-week engagement that will run through Sunday, Oct. 23—Tuesday evening, Oct. 4: "Diversion of Angels," "The Dying Swan" (with guest artist Maya Plisetskaya), "El Penitente" (with guest artist Mikhail Baryshnikov), and "Letter to the World" (with Kathleen Turner, narrator). . . . ¶ Wednesday evening, Oct. 5: "Seraphic Dialogue," excerpts from the repertory, and "Appalachian Spring." . . . ¶ Thursday evening, Oct. 6: "Embattled Garden," Act I of "Clytemnestra," and "Temptations of the Moon." . . . ¶ Friday evening, Oct. 7: "Embattled Garden," excerpts from the repertory, and "The Rite of Spring." . . . ¶ Saturday matinée, Oct. 8: "El Penitente," "Cave of the Heart," and "Appalachian Spring." . . . ¶ Saturday evening, Oct. 8: "Appalachian Spring," "Letter to the World," and "The Rite of Spring." . . . ¶ Sunday matinée, Oct. 9: Excerpts from the repertory, Act I of "Clytemnestra," and "Diversion of Angels." . . . ¶ Sunday evening, Oct. 9: "Temptations of the Moon," "El Penitente," "Cave of the Heart," and "Letter to the World." . . . ¶ Tuesday evening, Oct. 11: "Diversion of Angels," "Errand Into the Maze," "Cave of the Heart," and "Phaedra." . . . ¶ Wednesday evening, Oct. 12: "El Penitente," "Heretic," "Cave of the Heart," and "Letter to the World." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 246-8989. Tuesdays, except Oct. 4, through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays and Tuesday, Oct. 4, at 7:30. Matinées at 2.)

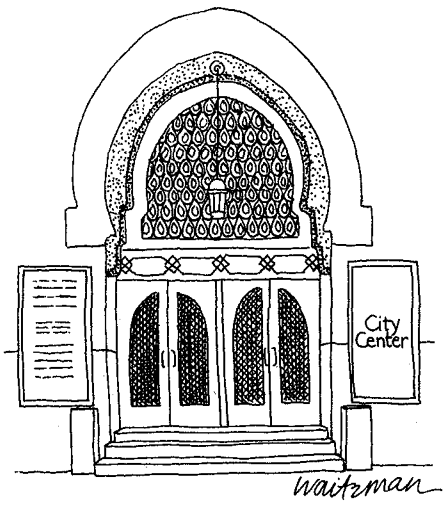
Joyce Trisler Danscompany—A one-week engagement. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Tuesday, Oct. 4, at 7:30; Wednesday through Saturday, Oct. 5-8, at 8; and Sunday, Oct. 9, at 2 and 7:30.)

Molissa Fenley—In a program of new solo works. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Thursday through Monday, Oct. 6-10, at 8:30.)

Nikolais Dance Theatre—A single performance of contemporary dance. (Schimmel Center for the Arts, Pace University, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 488-1715. Saturday, Oct. 8, at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians an night-club proprietors live complicated live that are subject to last-minute change; it i therefore always advisable to call ahead.)



Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A bi soigné cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, in th heart of the fur and fashion-student district **BLOSSOM DEARIE,** the owner of one of the smal est and subtlest voices in town, sings fror her collection of Frishberg, Wallowitch, Me cer, Coleman, et al. at six-thirty Wednesday through Saturdays.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway; at 105th St. (749 2228)—A fledgling jazz operation that take its name from the long-gone midtown plea sure dome (1949-65). It's a cool person's kin of habitat: it has pastel walls, tile floors, an a high ceiling, and is lightly forested. Guitar ist **JACK WILKINS** leads a trio on Wednesday Oct. 5, and a combo run by the veteran hard bop team of **BILL HARDMAN** (trumpet) an **JUNIOR COOK** (tenor saxophone) holds fort Friday and Saturday, Oct. 7-8. Music fror nine Sundays through Thursdays and fror nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475 8592)—A really blue but not really Ne York jazz club; the idea for the brass plaque that are engraved with the names of visitin jazz stars and embedded in the blue table appears to have been borrowed from Holly wood. **DAVE FRISHBERG,** whose fine and funn songs include "My Attorney Bernie" (about big-shot L.A. lawyer who has, inter alia "Dodger season boxes and an office full c foxes") and "Do You Miss New York?" (writ ten after he had left it for L.A.) and "Va Lingle Mungo" (a boy's epic catalogue c baseball names), will be around Tuesday an Wednesday, Oct. 4-5. **STÉPHANE GRAPPELLI,** th great white-haired French violinist, enter with his trio for four nights starting Thurs day, Oct. 6. **SARAH VAUGHAN,** who still perform unusual and thrilling feats with her might voice, comes in on Tuesday, Oct. 11. First se at nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228 6300)—On the east side of the building behind a dusty display window, there's New York *Post* review of a Santana concer that took place here circa 1978; curatoria neglect seems to have made it a permanen exhibit. Inside, it's Tommy Conwell & th Young Rumblers, an old-hat rock band fror Philadelphia, on Monday and Tuesday, Oct 3-4; **HOTHOUSE FLOWERS,** an Irish folk-roc group whose lead singer sounds like a cros between Van Morrison and David Byrne, o Wednesday, Oct. 5; Nashville singer-song writer **JOHN HIATT** for three nights startin Thursday, Oct. 6; and **JIM MORRIS** (a takeo artist best known for his ability to simulat the thought processes and speech patterns c Ronald Reagan) and folksinger **TOM PAXTON** o Sunday, Oct. 9. Shows Sundays throug Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Friday and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven thirty.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228 6440)—A neighborhood bar, famous in thi *precinct and the wider world for its pianist* and bassists; a barstool sometimes serves as good viewing perch, and sometimes doesn' (standees abound on peak nights). The dap per, bespectacled gent spinning out sparklin bebop lines is **TOMMY FLANAGAN;** he'll be here with bassist **RAY DRUMMOND,** through Saturday Oct. 8. **JOANNE BRACKEEN,** whose style is lus and million-noted, works with bassist **CECI MC BEE** beginning Monday, Oct. 10. Musi from nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlos I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982 3260)—Long communal tables swathed i pink and a bandstand panelled in oak. **BENN CARTER,** the eighty-one-year-old alto saxophon ist whose playing is as elegant and satiny a ever, is here with a quartet Tuesday throug Sunday, Oct. 4-9. Carter also plays trumpet he's direct, unfussy, and lyrical. A foursome run by **HARRY (SWEETS) EDISON,** the crackerjack Basie-band trumpeter, who turns seventy-three this month, goes to work on Tuesday, Oct. 11. Mondays belong to a quartet led by tenor saxophonist **BIG NICK NICHOLAS.** Music from nine-thirty.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Bemelmans Bar, a small, well-

The
Mobil
Television
Season
on
PBS '88-'89

Mobil
Masterpiece
Theatre
9PM Sundays
Begins
October 16

A Perfect Spy
Heaven on Earth
All Passion Spent
A Wreath of Roses
A Very British Coup
Christabel
The Charmer
The Bretts, II

MYSTERY!
9PM Saturdays
Begins
October 15

Cause Célèbre
Sherlock Holmes
Inspector Morse, II
Miss Marple, IV
Game, Set and Match

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

upholstered room, has Ludwig Bemelmans' whimsical drawings and **RONNY WHYTE'S** proficient piano and pleasant baritone. Music from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—There's not a lot of elbow- or headroom in this downstairs jazz club, but the musicians sometimes make you forget all about it. Bassists, once low-profile timekeepers and now booming front men, are in charge of most of the music here for the next couple of weeks. **HARVIE SWARTZ,** who plays a newfangled narrow-body standup electric bass, leads a band called Urban Earth Tuesday through Thursday, Oct. 4-6. **MORGANA KING,** a jazz singer who chases after high notes with a mystic's intensity, performs Friday through Sunday, Oct. 7-9. **RON CARTER** brings in his two-bass quartet—he plays a piccolo version of the bass in this lineup—on Tuesday, Oct. 11; later in the week, this foursome swells to a nonet. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—A satisfying combination of Chinese food and homegrown music. Rubberneckers may see the moon wheeling by the greenhouse roof on its nightly tour of romantic Manhattan. **JANE JARVIS,** who used to work regularly under the stars that shine on Queens (she was the Shea Stadium organist for sixteen years), plays the piano here Tuesday through Sunday, Oct. 4-9; **STEVE LA SPINA** is on bass. **DICK HYMAN** and **RUBY BRAFF,** whose collaborations include a live recording on which Hyman plays a 1927 Wurlitzer pipe organ, play piano-cornet duets on Monday, Oct. 10. **RALPH SUTTON,** a pianist of the Old Two-Handed School, takes over on Tuesday, Oct. 11. Music from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

J'S, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An Upper West Side music room, one flight up from the hurly-burly. Jazz people are on the premises nightly except Sundays, when a jukebox stocked with sixties rock and soul lights up. The lineup: Wednesday, Oct. 5, pianist **MIKE RENZI'S** trio (with drummer-singer **GRADY TATE**); Friday, Oct. 7, the **MICROSCOPIC SEPTET;** Saturday, Oct. 8, clarinettist **KEN PEPLOWSKI'S** quartet; and Wednesday, Oct. 12, bassist-singer **JAY LEONHART'S** duo. Music from eight Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy corner bar and restaurant with a piano at the center of things. **HARRY CONNICK, JR.,** the latest good news to come up the river from New Orleans, mans the piano through Monday, Oct. 10. **RUSS KASSOFF,** a fleet single-note pianist who has served as Liza Minnelli's accompanist, works with bassist **GARY MAZZAROPPI** starting Tuesday, Oct. 11. Music from nine-thirty.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor retreat that features avant-garde jazz, advanced and unadvanced rock, medicinal teas, medicinal beer, and space to think your thoughts in. **GERI ALLEN,** a young Detroit-born pianist who once worked for Mary Wilson (of the Supremes) and whose own music tends toward free funk, leads a group on Tuesday, Oct. 4; **NAKED CITY,** a quintet made up of downtown luminaries **JOHN ZORN, WAYNE HORVITZ, BILL FRISELL, FRED FRITH,** and **JOEY BARON,** holds forth Thursday and Friday, Oct. 6-7; saxophonist **STEVE COLEMAN'S** band has the floor Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 8-9. Music after nine.

LONE STAR CAFÉ, 61 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. (242-1664)—This hangout for homesick Texans, French tourists, and local yokels brags that it's "the biggest and best honky-tonk north of Abilene." Big it ain't, but it does feature some genuine honky-tonk music, a souvenir stand, and TV monitors (which permit you to watch the action onstage in case your view of it is obscured by a cowboy or a structural element). **LAZY LESTER,** a Louisiana bluesman with a sleepy-rough country voice, sounds off on Monday, Oct. 3; a new version of **PENTANGLE,** a British folk band that flourished in the early seventies, performs on Thursday, Oct. 6; and **ROOMFUL OF BLUES,** a spirited bunch of jump-blues revivalists from Rhode Island, holds forth Friday and Saturday, Oct. 7-8. Music after nine. Hot vittles.

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LONE STAR CAFÉ ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—The midtown branch of the aforementioned establishment. The façade is a Silver Eagle bus, the kind your itinerant musician cat tools around in. The inside features some stuff you probably wouldn't find in a county-line roadhouse—like a wall full of de-luxe Gibson guitars—and some you might expect to find: beer, neon beer signs, and men wearing dozer caps. Most of the music—rock, country, blues—is provided by local talent. Activity after nine. Dining.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A mid-Manhattan pub for well-heeled gents and their high-heeled foxes. **MEL TORMÉ,** whose voice can be heard issuing from Daffy Duck in a new Warner Bros. cartoon (dreaming that he must perform for a roomful of monsters, Daffy drinks Eau de Tormé and knocks 'em dead), can be seen and heard here Tuesday through Saturday, Oct. 4-8. Shows at nine and eleven. Paul Williams, who played Swan, the mastermind of Death Records, in Brian De Palma's "Phantom of the Paradise" and is the composer of click tunes such as "We've Only Just Begun," pipes up on Tuesday, Oct. 11. Dining. Closed Sundays.

MIKELL'S, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—A spiffy uptown bar and restaurant, with signed photographs of some swinging non-musicians on the walls (Reggie Jackson smiling shyly, Dave Winfield tuning up in the cage) and some heavy hitters on the bandstand. Drummer **ART BLAKEY** and his young followers, the **JAZZ MESSENGERS,** deliver hard bop Friday and Saturday, Oct. 7-8. Music from about ten until two.

RITZ, 119 E. 11th St. (254-2800)—Fifty years ago, people practiced the jitterbug and the foxtrot in this ballroom; today's patrons listen mainly to rock, which issues from speakers the size of mobile homes, and sometimes engage in a combination of exercise and intimacy known as slam dancing. Aswad, a reggae group, performs Friday, Oct. 7; **DAVID LINDLEY,** a standout L.A. studio musician known for his work with Jackson Browne and Linda Ronstadt and others, leads his own band, **EL RAYO-X,** on Saturday, Oct. 8. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A big, cheerful room, painted a light tropical blue, where you can pick 'em up and set 'em down to sounds from Brazil, Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. Ample seating for the contemplative. The schedule: Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct. 4-5, tenor saxophonist **STANLEY TURRENTINE'S** group; Thursday, Oct. 6, Nigerian percussionist **BABA OLATUNJI** & His Drums of Passion; Saturday, Oct. 8, **MIKATA;** and Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 12-13, Latin-jazz men **EDDIE PALMIERI** and **MARIO RIVERA.** Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Mondays.

SPEAKEASY, 107 Macdougal St. (598-9670)—A central Village lounge for folkies and others who practice low-decibel (but not necessarily low-voltage) music. Veteran Chicago folkie **BOB GIBSON** has the floor on Friday, Oct. 7. Shows nightly from eight-thirty. Dining.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—**ART FARMER,** a gentle-toned flugelhornist, will be in this Village temple of jazz (pressed-tin ceiling, grainy b. & w. photos of your favorite demigods, knee-to-knee seating) nightly except Mondays, leading a quintet that includes tenor saxophonist **CLIFFORD JORDAN.** Shows from ten. Dining.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the gym-size downstairs room, Latin-jazz bands play for their excitable fans on Mondays after nine-thirty. **CHUCK MANGIONE,** a flugelhornist and keyboardist who can usually be found under his felt hat making flossy pop-jazz sounds, will be here Tuesday through Sunday, Oct. 4-9. First set at nine-thirty. . . . ¶ One flight up, in the airy space known as the Terrace Bar, **BOB DOROUGH** is at the piano, playing and singing songs by Frishberg, Ellington, Waller, Randy Newman, and himself. Dorough, whose career included a stint as Sugar Ray Robinson's accompanist (in the early fifties, when Robinson quit boxing and took up tap dancing) and whose singing is peppered with shouts and hisses and knockabout scatting, is here Tuesdays through Sundays, with bassist **BILL TAKAS.** Music from ten.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—People from all over the world descend the stairs to this ancient jazz club; many of them later emerge from it in an excited condition. The **MINGUS DYNASTY BAND,** a sextet overseen by the bassist's widow and led by trombonist **JIMMY KNEPPER,** plays the Master's stormy, jubilant, angry, outsize music for six nights starting Tuesday, Oct. 4. **DOROTHY DONEGAN** commences a week-long run on Tuesday, Oct. 11. A Donegan performance usually features a whirligig display of Art Tatum-style piano (during which one is likely to hear stride passages, rhapsodic Gershwin, a patch of Rachmaninoff, rocking boogie-woogie) and a fair amount of mugging and foot-stomping fooling around. Mondays are prime time for **MEL LEWIS'S** big band. Music from ten.

WEST END, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—The big room in this student rest stop (Columbia U. is across the street) has a non-institutional cafeteria, a bar that can seat a marching band, and a jukebox. The smaller room has tables, booths, a couple of hanging plants, and live jazz. **PAULA LOCKHEART,** a Long Island-born singer who does Billie Holiday material and Ray Charles blues and Louis Jordan jump tunes (and plays hot kazoo), will be around Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct. 4-5. Ex-Basie-band trumpeter **JOE NEWMAN** leads a quartet Thursday through Sunday, Oct. 6-9. On Mondays, comedians stand up and fall down. Shows from nine.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—If you like pictures of cows, there's a good one here, by the British painter Malcolm Morley, of some Holsteins adrift in a Turneresque landscape. There's also jazz, which flows peaceably from a passageway between the front-room bar and the back-room restaurant. Pianist **DICK KATZ** and bassist **MICHAEL MOORE** work together through Saturday, Oct. 8; **JOHN CAMPBELL,** Mel Tormé's light-fingered accompanist, takes over with bassist Jay Anderson on Sunday, Oct. 9. Music weeknights from eight, and Sundays from seven.

JAZZ / ROCK / PERSONAL APPEARANCES / PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

PRINCE—Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Monday, Oct. 3, at 8.

JACKSON BROWNE—In a benefit concert. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 5-6, at 8.)

LUTHER VANDROSS—With Anita Baker. (Madison

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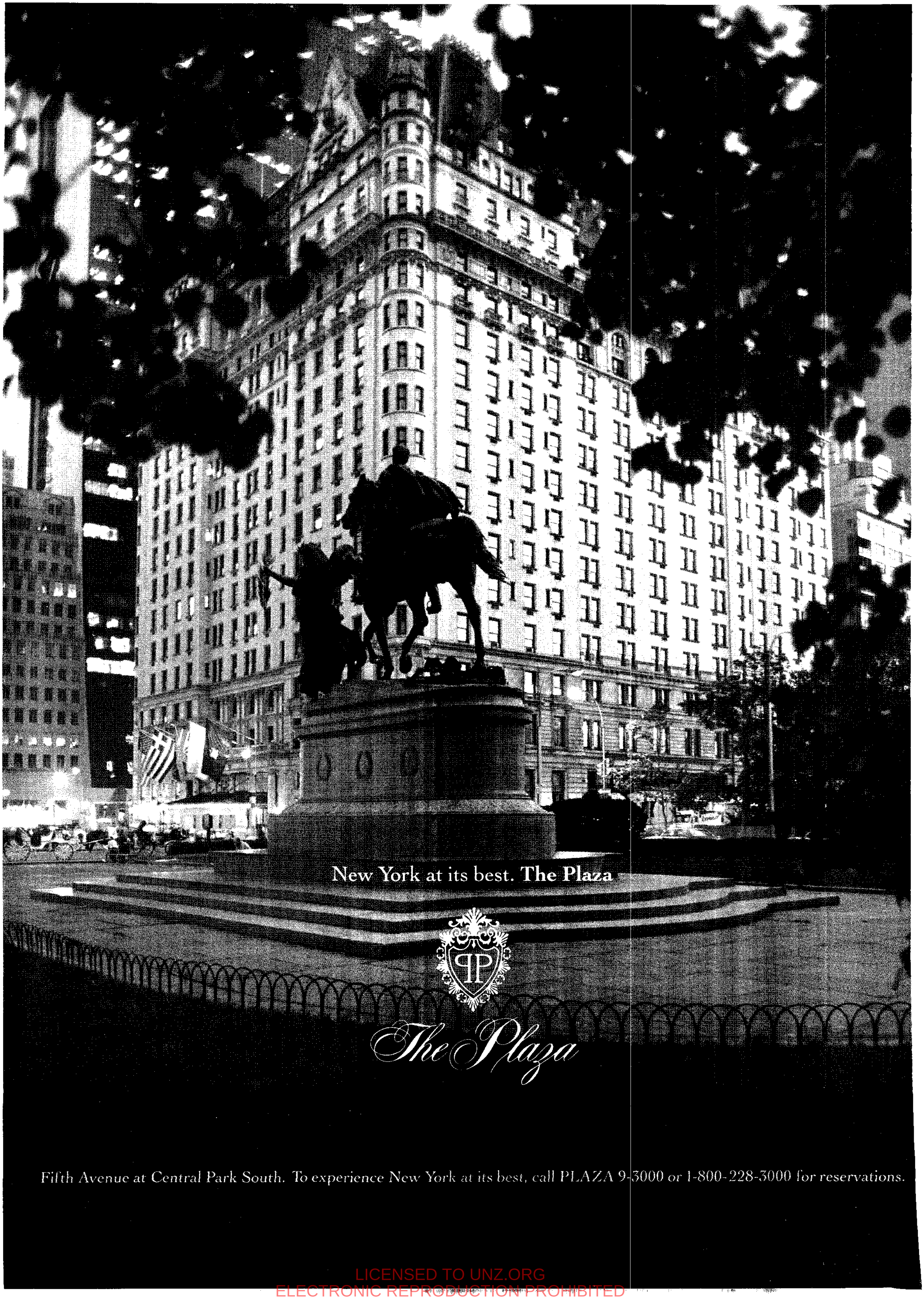
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

Square Garden. Wednesday through Saturday, Oct. 5-8, at 8.)

Sly & Robbie and the Taxi Gang—Beacon Theatre. Friday, Oct. 7, at 8.

Midnight Oil—Felt Forum, Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Friday, Oct. 7, at 8.

Music with African Roots—With the No Name Gospel Singers, Los Pleneros de la 21, Thokoza, and Papa Susso. (Hunter College Playhouse, Park Ave. at 68th St. Friday, Oct. 7, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Holly Near—With John Bucchino and Lillian Allen. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Saturday, Oct. 8, at 8.)

Spyro Gyra—With Kenny Rankin. (Beacon Theatre. Saturday, Oct. 8, at 8.)

All Nite Soul—A twelve-hour jazz marathon, with the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band, Billy Taylor, Daphne Hellman and Hellman's Angels, Frank Foster, and many others. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-2200. Sunday, Oct. 9, beginning at 5.)

Thuli Dumakude—With Thokoza and Bayeza. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Sunday, Oct. 9, at 5.)

Van Halen—With Private Life. (Madison Square Garden. Tuesday, Oct. 11, at 7:30.)

Little Feat—With John Kilzer. (Beacon Theatre. Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 12-13, at 8.)

John Denver—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 757-3100. Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 12-13, at 8.

Benefit Concert—With the Ahmad Jamal quartet, George Mraz, James Moody, Diane Schuur, and others. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Friday, Oct. 7, at 8.)

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Hannelore Baron (1926-87)—Collages and boxes with bird imagery. Through Oct. 29. (Schlesinger, 822 Madison Ave., at 69th St.)

Robert Birmelin—Large-scale paintings and drawings steadfastly confronting urban anomie. Through Nov. 10. (Bernard, 33 E. 74th St.)

Henry Botkin (1896-1983)—Representational and abstract paintings. Through Nov. 5. (Childs, 956 Madison Ave., at 75th St.)

Alexander Calder (1898-1976)—Drawings, stabiles, and mobiles. Through Oct. 22. (Mathes, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.) . . . ¶ Gouaches. Through Oct. 15. (Haime, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Joel Fisher / Marianne Eigenheer—Sculptures. / Drawings. Through Oct. 30. (Swiss Institute, 35 W. 67th St. Mondays through Fridays, 2 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, 2 to 6.)

Stuart Frost—Pen-and-ink drawings of fantasy architecture, heavily embroidered with, say, figures or plants. Through Wednesday, Oct. 12. (Babcock, 20 E. 67th St. Closes at 4 on Saturdays.)

Edward Hopper (1882-1967) / **Blanche Lazzell** (1878-1956)—At the heart of this show is a group of drawings of Gloucester and Cape Cod, many of them, such as "Cape Cod Morning," studies for major paintings. The gallery owns the drawings; related paintings have been borrowed from public and private collections. Through Nov. 12. / Twenty prints and monotypes. Through Oct. 29. (Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St.)

Anna and Wolfgang Kubach-Wilmsen—Stone sculptures representing books, letters, and newspapers. Through Oct. 22. (Staempfli, 47 E. 77th St.)

Moses Soyer (1899-1974) **and Raphael Soyer** (1899-1987)—Seventy-five paintings, including scenes of Paris in 1926 by Moses and early landscapes by Raphael. Through Oct. 21. (Radann, 16 E. 79th St. Opens at noon.)

Joseph Stella (1877-1946)—Tropical paintings and drawings. Through Oct. 29. (York, 21 E. 65th St.)

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Michael Tetherow—Abstract paintings. Through Oct. 29. (McCoy, 19 E. 71st St.)

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Will Barnet—A dozen abstract paintings spanning the years 1940 to 1960. Through Oct. 15. (Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St.)

Rudolf Bauer (1889-1953)—Geometric paintings and works on paper from the twenties and thirties. Through Friday, Oct. 7. (Kerr, 37 W. 57th St.)

William Beckman—Two double portraits of the artist and his wife, and the studies for them. Through Oct. 19. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

Chuck Close—Three exhibits. New portrait paintings (of Cindy Sherman, Alex Katz, and others) at Pace, 32 E. 57th St., second floor; on the third floor, recent prints and photographs, including flower subjects. . . . ¶ Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St., has photographs from the past twenty years. All through Oct. 22.

Alan Cote—Abstract paintings. Through Oct. 29. (Washburn, 41 E. 57th St.)

Bruce Dorfman—Color-field paintings. Through Oct. 29. (Arras, 24 W. 57th St.)

Robert Goodnough and David Hare—Abstract paintings and sculptures by each artist. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. (Shippee, 41 E. 57th St.)

Tsugio Hattori—Abstract paintings. Through Oct. 29. (Reece, 24 W. 57th St.)

Rebecca Horn—Kinetic sculptures powered by small motors which describe arcs, flap back and forth, and splatter paint around, all in a coldly humorous manner. Through Oct. 15. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Michael Kessler—Thickly painted abstractions. Through Oct. 29. (Tilton, 24 W. 57th St.)

Milan Kunc / Bruce Weber—Paintings. / New photographs of figures. Through Oct. 29. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Elsie Manville—Still-lifes. Through Oct. 19. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

G. Daniel Massad—Allegorical still-lifes in pastels. For instance, "Quince and Canteen" is intended to evoke the pathos of war. Through Oct. 29. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St.)

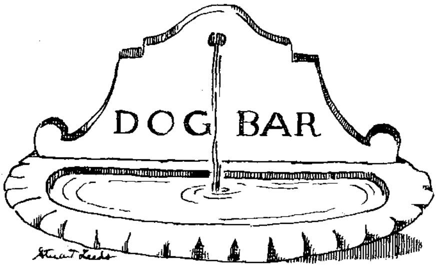
Ann McCoy—Recent drawings and sculptures paying tribute to Roman, Greek, and Egyptian goddesses. Through Oct. 22. (ACA, 41 E. 57th St.)

Georges Noël—Abstract canvases whose surfaces are pocked and scratched. Through Oct. 29. (Herstand, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Harvey Quaytman—Ten new paintings with cruciform motifs. Through Oct. 26. (McKee, 41 E. 57th St.)

Rodney Ripps—Drab stripe paintings with three-dimensional wood protrusions. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

Thomas Lanigan Schmidt—Adolescent rites of passage are the theme of new three-dimensional works by an artist who continues to work the mines of tinfoil. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. (Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)



GALLERIES—SoHo

Dotty Attie—A draftsman noted for her illustrated stories is showing a group of paintings based on details from works by Caravaggio, Ingres, Eakins, and others. Through Oct. 15. (P.P.O.W, now located at 532 Broadway.)

Joseph Beuys (1921-86)—An installation entitled "Half Time," documenting the artist's 1982 planting of seven thousand oak trees in West Germany. Through Oct. 15. (Gallery Moos, 133 Greene St.) . . . ¶ Sculptures, drawings, and prints. Through Oct. 29. (Nolan, 560 Broadway.)

Deborah Butterfield—Six large-scale horses welded from found painted metal. Through Oct. 29. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Loren D. Calaway—A survey of objects that seem to be functional but aren't. Through Oct. 29. (Viafora, 568 Broadway.)

Frederick Childs—Paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. (Brown, 560 Broadway.)

Y. J. Cho / Masao Gozu—Photo-Realist paintings of city corners and alleyways. / Photographs. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. (O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway.)

Constance Dodge—Figurative paintings juxtaposed with tape recordings of Mark Nepo's poetry. Through Oct. 20. (Eno, 164 Mercer St.)

Karen Erla—Large sheets of Japanese paper painted in high-key colors. Through Oct. 29. (Stark, 568 Broadway. Opens at noon.)

Douglas Florian—Large-scale paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. (Condeso-Lawler, 76 Greene St.)

Nobu Fukui—Collage paintings. Through Oct. 22. (112 Greene Street Gallery.)

Sidney Geist / Elliott Barowitz—Sculptures. / Paintings of airplanes and war machines. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. (Ingber, 415 West Broadway.)

Robert Grosvenor—Two new sculptures. Through Oct. 29. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

David Hacker—New sculptures and drawings. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. (Plumb, 81 Greene St.)

Budd Hopkins / Ellen Weiner—Paintings and large-scale wood sculptures. / Abstract works on paper. Through Oct. 13. (Pearl, 420 West Broadway.)

Eve Ingalls—Abstractions. Through Oct. 29. (Allen, 560 Broadway.)

Joseph Kosuth—Freud writ large again. Through Oct. 15. (Castelli, 578 Broadway, a new venue for the peripatetic dealer.)

Jannis Kounellis—An installation incorporating soil, rocks, burlap, and steel. Through Oct. 15. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Margaret Leveson—Landscapes in pastels. Through Oct. 19. (Blue Mountain, 121 Wooster St. Open daily, except Mondays, at noon.)

Jim Nutt—Portraits of figures with cockeyed features. Through Oct. 18. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

Ludwig Sander (1906-75)—A retrospective of geometric color-field paintings. Through Oct. 15. (Esman, 70 Greene St.)

Kenny Scharf—New paintings with titles such as "Obglob" and "Ing," many of which seem to pulsate with amoebas or arteries. Through Oct. 22. (Shafrazi, 163 Mercer St.)

Arlene Slavin—Traditional and not so traditional screens painted with jungle scenes. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. (Perlow, 560 Broadway.)

Mike and Doug Starn—The Starn twins showing new photographic collages: At Castelli, 420 West Broadway (through Oct. 15); and Stux, 155 Spring St. (through Oct. 29).

Anton van Dalen—A retrospective of paintings, sculptures, drawings, and objects such as wooden toys and dioramas. Through Oct. 29. (Exit Art, 578 Broadway.)

Clemens Weiss—An installation of transparent boxes that hold drawings, paintings, writings, and objects. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

Group Material—This collaborative has in-

ART—Cont'd

stalled a classroom, the walls of which are hung with authentic student art and art by professionals. Jenny Holzer has an electronic sign that flashes messages like "If you had behaved nicely the Communists wouldn't exist." Through Saturday, Oct. 8. (Dia Art Foundation, 77 Wooster St. Opens at noon.)

Group Shows—At the **audiello,** 142 Greene St.: Sculptures by Saint Clair Cemin, Joel Fisher, Jon Kessler, and Joel Otterson. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. . . . **castelli,** 142 Greene St.: Works by Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Richard Serra, and Frank Stella in the last show at this location. Through Oct. 22. . . . **gladstone,** 99 Greene St.: Sculptures by Carl Andre, Jannis Kounellis, and Bruce Nauman. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. . . . **schreiber-cutler,** 171 Spring St.: Paintings by Cornelia Foss, Milton Resnick, Elaine de Kooning, and others. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. . . . **shainman,** 560 Broadway: A sculpture each by Alice Aycock, Magdalena Jetelová, and Susana Solano in what the gallery calls a "Dialogue with Space." Through Oct. 15.

OTHER GALLERIES

Alan Charlton—New paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. (Klein, 611 Broadway.)

Perry Hoberman—Wall sculptures. Through Sunday, Oct. 9. (Postmasters, 66 Avenue A, near 4th St. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Michelangelo Pistoletto—Mirror-based works predominate in a show covering three decades of this Arte Povera artist's output. Through Nov. 27. (P.S. 1, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Ramm-Ell-Zee—Ephemera such as computer printouts and pages from telephone books are frozen in a resin gel along with objects like billiard balls and a tiny violin. The whole assemblage is painted in Day-Glo colors. Through Oct. 29. (Braathen, 33 Bleecker St., at Lafayette St.)

Cy Twombly—Works on paper from 1969 to 1985. Through Oct. 22. (Baghoomian, 611 Broadway.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Ken Heyman—Pictures of city life by a photographer who shoots from the hip. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Opens at noon.)

Jerzy Kosinski—Photographs of Poland and Russia in the fifties. Through Oct. 15. (Zarre, 379 West Broadway.)

Robert Mapplethorpe—The Whitney Museum has mounted a show of his photographs. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

Arnold Newman—A retrospective. Through Oct. 29. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.) . . . ¶ Portraits of Pollock, Warhol, and Mondrian, among other works. Through Saturday, Oct. 8. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Nicholas Nixon—Portraits of people with AIDS. Through Oct. 22. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays. A complementary show is at the Museum of Modern Art.)

Richard Ross—Diptychs and triptychs that contain photographs of sections of Old Master paintings. Through Nov. 3. (Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

Louis Stettner—Photographs of street scenes in the United States, Mexico, and Europe, taken between 1947 and 1972. Through Oct. 22. (Photofind, 138 Spring St.)

James Welling—Photographs of draperies and diaries and of buildings designed by H. H. Richardson. Through Oct. 15. (Gorney, 100 Greene St.)

Don Worth—A retrospective of prints by an artist who takes closeups of cacti and tropical flowers. Through Oct. 15. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

National Geographic Society Photographs—In celebration of its centennial, the Society has mined its archives for these two hundred and sixty-five photographs of panoramic landscapes, outer-space and underwater scenes, and people who leave home without the American Express card. Fewer than half of the works have appeared in *The National Geographic.* Through Oct. 30. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

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MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A retrospective of works by Umberto Boccioni, an Italian Futurist painter and the only sculptor in that movement. Through Jan. 8. . . . ¶ A selection of watercolors and drawings by Paul Cézanne from the last thirty years of his life. Through Nov. 6. . . . ¶ Arata Isozaki's study for the entrance to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles is among the acquisitions of architectural drawings, prints, and books on display; others range from the sixteenth century to the present and come from Europe and America. Through Jan. 8. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

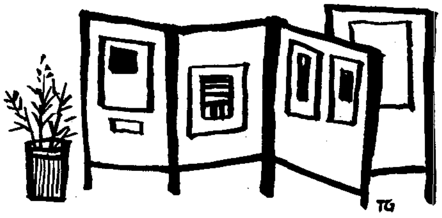
Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—A comprehensive show of the drawings of Philip Guston. Through Nov. 1. . . . **photography:** About a hundred prints by Nicholas Nixon. Through Nov. 13. The artist also has an exhibit at the Zabriskie Gallery, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Silk screens and drawings from Andy Warhol's Mercedes-Benz series, a project he was working on at the time of his death. . . . ¶ A show of works from the fifties and sixties by Americans and Europeans—Beuys, Cornell, Hesse, Oldenburg, Nevelson, and others—who went against the tide of Abstract Expressionism by using images from pop culture and unconventional materials. Both shows through Nov. 27. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Fifteen years' worth of Robert Mapplethorpe's prints are assembled in a show of nudes, portraits, and still-lifes. Through Oct. 23. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—Cleopatra and other rulers of ancient Egypt's Ptolemaic dynasty (305-30 B.C.) are seen in a show of stone statuary and portrait heads. The period is also represented by reliefs, gold jewelry, silver vessels, and other objects. Starts Friday, Oct. 7. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—An exhibition re-creating the events of a four-year (1838-42) American naval expedition to the South Seas and Antarctica and displaying a wealth of materials brought back from that voyage, including charts and maps and flora and fauna.



Through Jan. 1. (Open daily. Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—In the seventeenth century, the cupboards and drawers of Burghley House, in Devonshire, were filled with Renaissance jewelry, pitchers with diamonds and rubies embedded in them, and gold and silver tableware. Sixty of these objets de vertu, preserved as heirlooms, have been brought here for display. Through Nov. 27. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—An exhibit of roughly a hundred music scores by, among others, Bach, Mahler, Arthur Sullivan, and Mozart (several by the last; the work on view that he composed at age five is in his father's hand). Through Nov. 6. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Geoffrey Beene, in the business now for twenty-five years, is being treated to a retrospective that includes not only clothes with his label but accessories, videos of fashion shows, and photographs by Horst, Richard Avedon, and others. Through Oct. 23. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—Malcolm McLaren, the subject of what the museum describes as "an unconventional art exhibition," has been called many things—most generously, rock producer, fashion designer, and cultural theorist. This collection of clothes, posters, album covers, cassettes, and videotapes follows McLaren's career as it bounced from the Sex Pistols to Adam and the Ants to a British fashion / bondage shop called Let It Rock. Through Nov. 20. (Open daily except Mondays and Tuesdays. Hours: Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library at Lincoln Center—A fortieth-anniversary salute to the New York City Ballet in which the works of set and costume designers get all the applause. On exhibit, for instance, are sets and costumes by Isamu Noguchi for Balanchine's "Orpheus" (1947) and, from the 1964 "Nutcracker," a model by Rouben Ter-Arutunian and a drawing by Karinska incorporating swatches of fabric. Through Jan. 6. (Open daily except Sundays. Hours: Mondays and Thursdays, 10 to 8; Tuesdays, 10 to 7; Wednesdays and Fridays, noon to 6; and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—Collage paintings by Benny Andrews dating from the fifties through the seventies. (Open daily except Mondays and Tuesdays. Hours: Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

MUSIC

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera is 362-6000; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—Monday, Oct. 3, at 8: "Il Trovatore," with Eva Marton, Fiorenza Cossotto, Luciano Pavarotti, and Sherrill Milnes; conducted by James Levine. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Oct. 4, at 7:30: "Giulio Cesare," with Kathleen Battle, Tatiana Troyanos, Martine Dupuy, Sarah Walker, and Jeffrey Gall; Trevor Pinnock. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Oct. 5, at 8: "Lucia di Lammermoor," with Edita Gruberova, Francisco Araiza, and Brian Schexnayder; Edoardo Müller. . . . ¶ Thursday, Oct. 6, at 8: "Das Rheingold," with Ellen Shade, Hanna Schwarz, Siegfried Jerusalem, and Hans Sotin; James Levine. . . . ¶ Friday, Oct. 7, at 7:30: "Giulio Cesare," with Kathleen Battle, Tatiana Troyanos, Martine Dupuy, Sarah Walker, and Jeffrey

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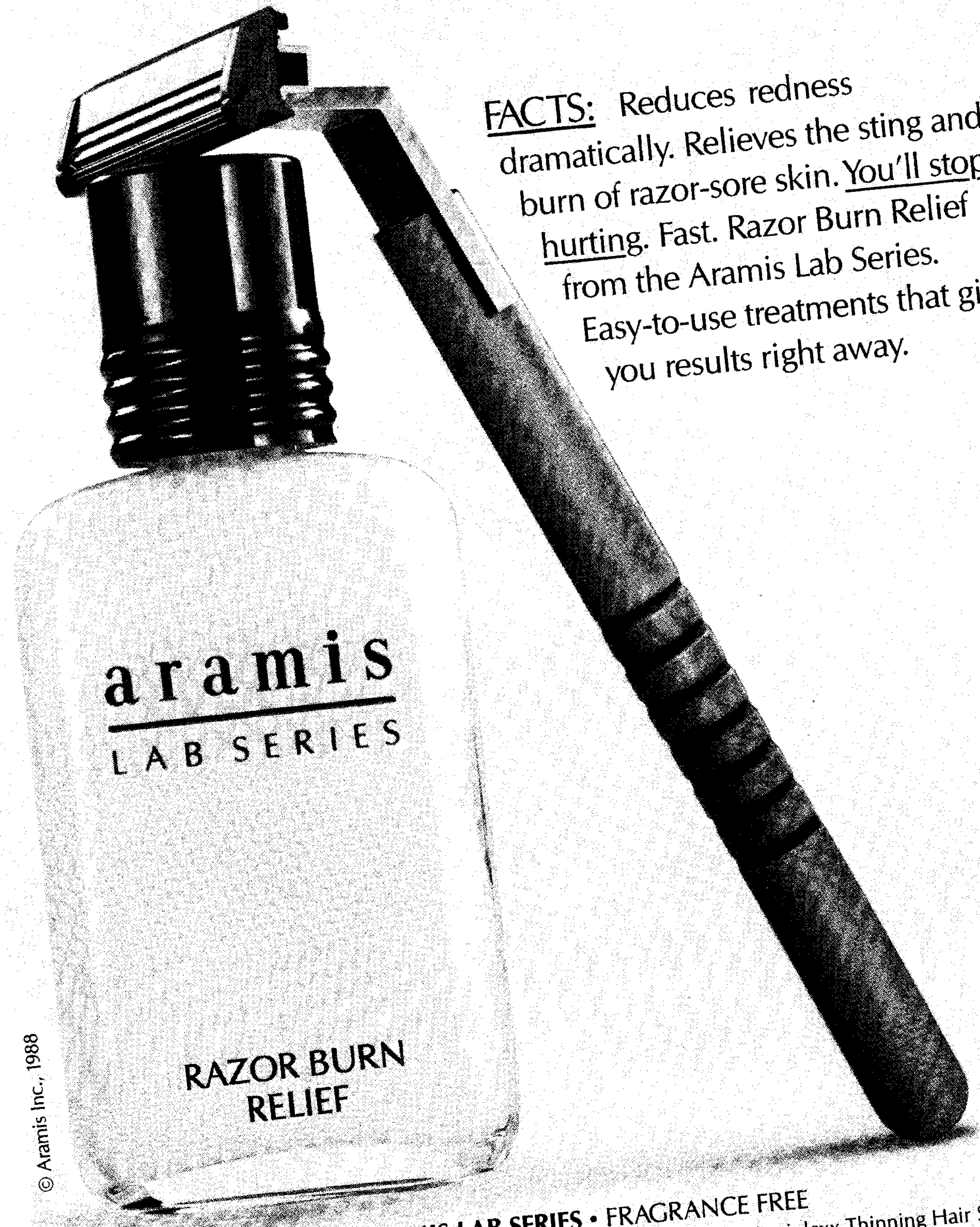

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MUSIC—Cont'd

Gall; Trevor Pinnock. . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 8, at 1:30: "Lucia di Lammermoor," with Edita Gruberova, Francisco Araiza, and Brian Schexnayder; Edoardo Müller. . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 8, at 8: "Il Trovatore," with Eva Marton, Dolora Zajick, Luciano Pavarotti, and Sherrill Milnes; James Levine. . . . ¶ Monday, Oct. 10, at 7:30: "Giulio Cesare," with Kathleen Battle, Tatiana Troyanos, Martine Dupuy, Sarah Walker, and Jeffrey Gall; Trevor Pinnock. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Oct. 11, at 8: "Il Trovatore," with Eva Marton, Dolora Zajick, Luciano Pavarotti, and Sherrill Milnes; James Levine. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Oct. 12, at 8: "Das Rheingold," with Eva Zseller, Hanna Schwarz, Gweneth Bean, Siegfried Jerusalem, and Hans Sotin; James Levine.

New York City Opera—Tuesday evening, Oct. 4: "Die Zauberflöte," with Sandra Moon, Virginia Sublett, Gran Wilson, and Joseph McKee; conducted by Sergiu Comissiona. . . . ¶ Wednesday evening, Oct. 5: "Rasputin," with Margaret Cusack, John Cheek, Jon Garrison, and Henry Price; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Friday evening, Oct. 7: "Rigoletto," with Christine Donahue, Janis Eckhart, Rodger Hugh Wangerin, and Paul Hartfield; Elio Boncompagni. . . . ¶ Saturday matinée, Oct. 8: "Tosca," with Linda Roark-Strummer, Robert Grayson, and Julian Patrick; Elio Boncompagni. . . . ¶ Saturday evening, Oct. 8: "Carmen," with Susanne Marsee, Maureen O'Flynn, John Absalom, and Kenneth Shaw; Michael Morgan. . . . ¶ Sunday matinée, Oct. 9: "The Ballad of Baby Doe," with Faith Esham, Joyce Castle, and William Parcher; Hal France. . . . ¶ Sunday evening, Oct. 9: "The Merry Widow," with Leigh Munro, Susanne Marsee, Richard White, and Michael Cousins; Imre Pallo. . . . ¶ Tuesday evening, Oct. 11: "Rasputin," with Margaret Cusack, John Cheek, Jon Garrison, and Henry Price; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Wednesday evening, Oct. 12: "The Ballad of Baby Doe," with Faith Esham, Joyce Castle, and William Parcher; Hal France. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 1. Through Sunday, Nov. 20.)

Mannes Camerata—Presenting a staged version of the medieval poem "Romance of the Rose." (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. Friday through Sunday, Oct. 7-9, at 8. For information about tickets, call 595-1747.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting "The Magic Flute." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Friday and Saturday, Oct. 7-8, at 7:30, and Sunday, Oct. 9, at 2:30.)

Il Piccolo Teatro dell'Opera—Frederick Renz conducting the Grande Bande in "Platée," Jean-Philippe Rameau's 1745 comic opera. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Wednesday, Oct. 12, at 11 A.M. Through Friday, Oct. 14.)

ORCHESTRAS

New York Philharmonic—Zubin Mehta conducting. Wednesday, Oct. 5, at 8: With Yo-Yo Ma, cello. . . . ¶ Thursday, Oct. 6, at 8; Friday, Oct. 7, at 2; and Saturday, Oct. 8, at 8: An all-Bruckner program. With Marvis Martin, soprano; Gail Dubinbaum, mezzo-soprano; Vinson Cole, tenor; Paul Plishka, bass; and Joseph Flummerfelt directing the Westminster Choir. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424.)

Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra—Jesús López-Cobos conducting, with Bella Davidovich, piano. (Carnegie Hall. Tuesday, Oct. 4, at 8.)

Dallas Symphony Orchestra—Eduardo Mata conducting works by Rachmaninoff and Stravinsky, with Vladimir Viardo, piano. (Carnegie Hall. Wednesday, Oct. 5, at 8.)

Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields—Iona Brown conducting and playing the violin, with Nobuko Imai, viola. (Carnegie Hall. Saturday, Oct. 8, at 8.)

American Composers Orchestra—Dennis Russell Davies conducting works by Stephen Sondheim and Marc Blitzstein, and a new concert version of Kurt Weill's "Lost in the Stars." With the Gregg Smith Singers, the Harlem School of the Arts Chorus, and vocal soloists. (Carnegie Hall. Sunday, Oct. 9, at 3.) . . . **Note:** Excerpts from the Weill piece will be heard at the Guggenheim Museum Auditorium, Fifth Ave. at 89th St., on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 7-8, at 8. For information about tickets, call 360-3503.

Boston Symphony—Seiji Ozawa conducting. Tuesday evening, Oct. 11: With Leon Fleisher, piano. . . . ¶ Wednesday and Thursday evenings, Oct. 12-13: Mahler's Ninth Symphony. (Carnegie Hall. Evenings at 8.)

Manhattan Philharmonia—Richard Fletcher conducting. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Friday, Oct. 7, at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Philharmonia Virtuosi—With Paul Peabody, violin, playing music by Vivaldi, Bach, and Heinrich Biber. (Triplex, 199 Chambers St. 618-1980. Friday, Oct. 7, at 8.)

Juilliard Orchestra—Otto-Werner Mueller conducting, with Hei-Kyung Hong, soprano. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Friday, Oct. 7, at 8.)

New York Chamber Symphony—The season opener, Gerard Schwarz conducting, includes a new work by Ned Rorem and a concert version of Bernstein's "Trouble in Tahiti." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Saturday, Oct. 8, at 8, and Sunday, Oct. 9, at 3.)

RECITALS

Chamber Players of the League-ISCM—In a program of contemporary chamber music. (Merkin Concert Hall. Tuesday, Oct. 4, at 8:30.)

Andrew Rangell—Piano, in the first of a seven-concert series of all thirty-two Beethoven sonatas. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Wednesday, Oct. 5, at 8.)

Itzhak Perlman—Violin, with Samuel Sanders, piano, playing Hindemith, Webern, Beethoven, and Bloch. (Carnegie Hall. Thursday, Oct. 6, at 8.)

North / South Consonance—Presenting contemporary chamber music from the Americas. (Merkin Concert Hall. Thursday, Oct. 6, at 8.)

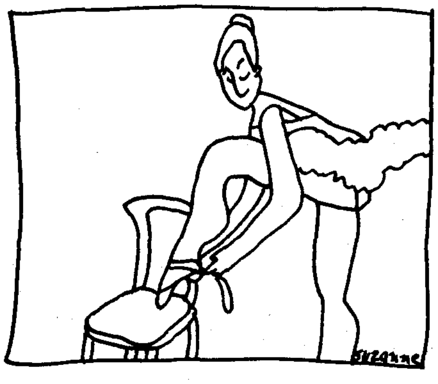
Arnold Steinhardt and Lydia Artymiw—Violin and piano. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Friday, Oct. 7, at 8.)

Steven Silverman—Piano. (Weill Recital Hall. Saturday, Oct. 8, at 5:30.)

Julian Bream—Classical guitarist. (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Sunday, Oct. 9, at 3.)

Musicians of Swanne Alley—Playing music from the English Renaissance. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. Sunday, Oct. 9, at 5. For information about tickets, call 288-0700.)

New York Festival of Song—The first concert in this new series consists of classical and contemporary songs that use Shakespeare's verse as lyrics. With Brenda Harris, soprano; Braden Harris, bass-baritone; and Steven Blier, piano. Blythe Danner will read several sonnets. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. Sunday, Oct. 9, at 5. For information about tickets, call 242-4770.)



Schubert Society—With Charles Treger, violin; Paul Sperry, tenor; the Canticum Novum Singers; and others. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Monday, Oct. 10, at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Aston Magna—Playing the music of Bach and his contemporaries on original instruments. (Merkin Concert Hall. Tuesday, Oct. 11, at 8.)

American String Quartet—Chamber music. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Tuesday, Oct. 11, at 8.)

Manhattan Vocal Ensemble—Nelly Vuksic directing a program of music by Domenico Zipoli. (Americas Society, Park Ave. at 68th St. Wednesday, Oct. 12, at 6. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Bethany Beardslee—Soprano, with Robert Helps, piano. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Wednesday, Oct. 12, at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—In a benefit concert. (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Wednesday, Oct. 12, at 8.)

On Original Instruments—A cello, violin, and fortepiano group playing Schubert and Beethoven. (Merkin Concert Hall. Wednesday, Oct. 12, at 8.)

SPORTS

(The ticket-information number for Madison Square Garden is 563-8300, for the Meadowlands 1-201 935-3900, and for Shea Stadium 1-718 507-8499.)

Baseball—National League Championship Series: In a best-of-seven series—the first two games will be in Los Angeles, Tuesday, Oct. 4, at 8:20, and Wednesday, Oct. 5, at 10:05; the third, fourth, and, if necessary, fifth games will be at Shea Stadium, Friday, Oct. 7, at 8:20; Saturday, Oct. 8, at 12:20; and Sunday, Oct. 9, at 8:20; if required, another two will be in Los Angeles, Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct. 11-12, at 8:20. All times listed are Eastern Daylight. . . . **American League Championship Series:** The Eastern Division winner and the Oakland A's begin their contest Wednesday, Oct. 5, in the East, and follow a similar game rotation.

Basketball—Exhibition game—Nets vs. Knicks. (Byrne Meadowlands Arena. Tuesday, Oct. 11, at 7:30.)

Hockey—Season Openers—At Madison Square Garden: Rangers vs. Devils, Monday, Oct. 10, at 7:30. . . . ¶ Rangers vs. Hartford Whalers, Wednesday, Oct. 12, at 7:30.

Racing—At **Belmont:** Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1; through Monday, Oct. 17. The Jockey Club Gold Cup, Saturday, Oct. 8; the Turf Classic Invitational and the Vosburgh, Sunday, Oct. 9. . . . **Meadowlands:** Weeknights at 7:30.

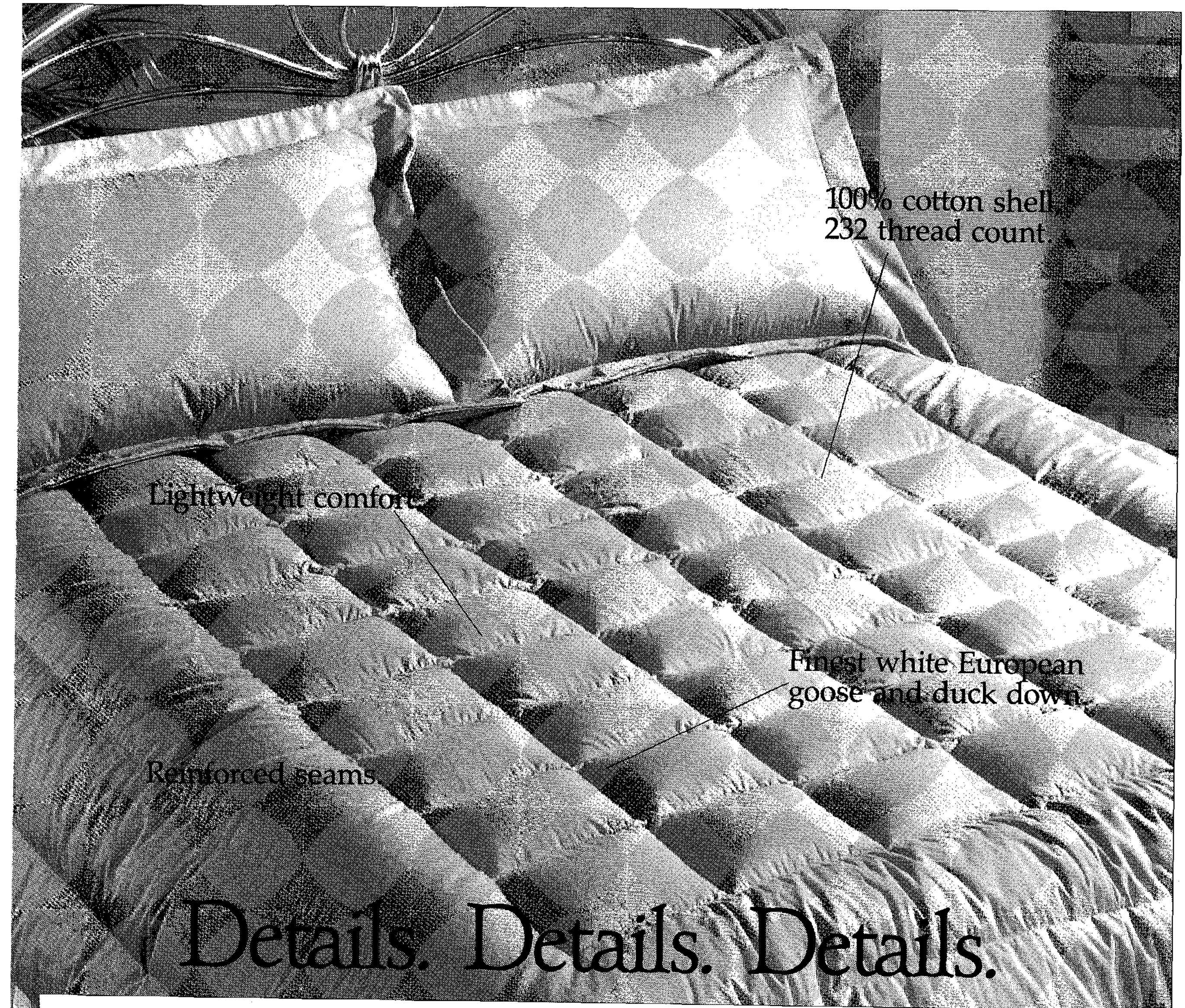
Trotting—At Yonkers Raceway: Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8.

ET ALIA

Edward Koren—Telling stories, showing slides, and answering questions. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. 873-3400. Wednesday, Oct. 12, at 6:30.)

Poetry and Prose Readings—Octavio Paz reading from his own poetry, in Spanish, with English translations read by Eliot Weinberger. Mr. Paz will also have a discussion about poetry with Joseph Brodsky. (City University Graduate Center Auditorium, 33 W. 42nd St. Tuesday, Oct. 4, at 7:30. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Saul Bellow reading from his own fiction. (92nd Street Y, Lexington at 92nd St. 427-4410. Monday, Oct. 10, at 8.) . . . ¶ Harold Brodkey reading from his own short stories. (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. Tuesday, Oct. 11, at 8. No tickets necessary.)

New York Armory Antiques Show—Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century furniture and decorative accessories brought by a hundred and ten dealers from the United States, Canada, and Europe. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Wednesday, Oct. 5, from 4 to 9; Thursday through Saturday, Oct. 6-8, from noon to 9; and Sunday, Oct. 9, from noon to 6.)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EAST SIDE

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171; theatre opens in the late afternoon and is closed Mondays.)
Through Oct. 6: (Separate admissions) “Doc’s Kingdom” (1987; directed by Robert Kramer), with Paul McIsaac and Vincent Gallo; and “Commissar” (1967; Alexander Askoldov; in Russian).
From Oct. 7: (Separate admissions) “The Man with Three Coffins” (1987; Lee Chang-Ho; in Korean); “A Promise” (1987; Yoshishige Yoshida; in Japanese); and “Commissar.”

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: “Sweet Hearts Dance” (Robert Greenwald), with Don Johnson, Susan Sarandon, Jeff Daniels, and Elizabeth Perkins.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 6: “Die Hard” (†). From Oct. 7: “Imagine: John Lennon” (Andrew Solt), a documentary.
Theatre 3: Through Oct. 6: “Betrayed” (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger. From Oct 7: “Alien Nation” (Graham Baker), with James Caan and Mandy Patinkin.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
“Dead Ringers” (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
“Gorillas in the Mist” (Michael Apted), with Sigourney Weaver.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: “Married to the Mob” (†).
Theatre 2: “A Fish Called Wanda” (†).
Theatre 3: “Memories of Me” (Henry Winkler), with Billy Crystal, Alan King, and JoBeth Williams.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
Through Oct. 6: “Crossing Delancey” (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.
From Oct. 7: “Punchline” (David Seltzer), with Sally Field and Tom Hanks.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
“Nightfall.”

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
“Ground Zero” (Michael Pattinson and Bruce Myles), with Colin Friels, Jack Thompson, and Donald Pleasence.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
“Dead Ringers” (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
“Bird” (Clint Eastwood), with Forest Whitaker.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 6: “Moon Over Parador” (†). From Oct. 7: “Alien Nation” (Graham Baker), with James Caan and Mandy Patinkin.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 6: “Midnight Run” (†). From Oct. 7: “Clara’s Heart” (Robert Mulligan), with Whoopi Goldberg.

D. W. Griffith, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
“Heartbreak Hotel” (Chris Columbus), with David Keith, Tuesday Weld, and Charlie Schlatter.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: “Running on Empty” (†).
Theatre 2: “Punchline” (David Seltzer), with Sally Field and Tom Hanks.

Cinema I and II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022/0774)
Theatre 1: Theatre closed.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 10: “Die Hard” (†). From Oct. 11: Theatre temporarily closed.

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 6: “Patty Hearst” (Paul Schrader), with Natasha Richardson. From Oct. 7: “Imagine: John Lennon” (Andrew Solt), a documentary.
Theatre 2: “Sweet Hearts Dance” (Robert Greenwald), with Don Johnson, Susan Sarandon, Jeff Daniels, and Elizabeth Perkins.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
“Gorillas in the Mist” (Michael Apted), with Sigourney Weaver.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: “Memories of Me” (Henry Winkler), with Billy Crystal, Alan King, and JoBeth Williams.
Theatre 2: “A Fish Called Wanda” (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
“Crossing Delancey” (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
“Married to the Mob” (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Through Oct. 6: “Sweet Hearts Dance” (Robert Greenwald), with Don Johnson, Susan Sarandon, Jeff Daniels, and Elizabeth Perkins.
From Oct. 7: “Punchline” (David Seltzer), with Sally Field and Tom Hanks.

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: “Elvira: Mistress of the Dark” (James Signorelli), with Elvira.
Theatre 2: “Tougher than Leather” (Rick Rubin), with Run-D.M.C.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 6: “Heartbreak Hotel” (Chris Columbus), with David Keith, Tuesday Weld, and Charlie Schlatter. From Oct. 7: To be announced.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 6: “Betrayed” (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger. From Oct. 7: “Alien Nation” (Graham Baker), with James Caan and Mandy Patinkin.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum I and 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatres open in the late afternoon.)
Theatre 1: “Nanou” (1987; directed by Conny Templeman), with Imogen Stubbs, Jean-Philippe Ecoffey, and Daniel Day-Lewis.
Theatre 2: See listings under “Revival Houses.”

Bleecker St. Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: “Big Time” (Chris Blum), with Tom Waits.
Theatre 2: “Big Time.”

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: “Crossing Delancey” (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 6: “Big” (†). From Oct. 7: “Punchline” (David Seltzer), with Sally Field and Tom Hanks.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
“Running on Empty” (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: “Moon Over Parador” (†).
Theatre 2: “Gorillas in the Mist” (Michael Apted), with Sigourney Weaver.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 6: “Babette’s Feast” (†). *From Oct. 7:* “Matador” (†).
Theatre 2: “Track 29” (Nicolas Roeg), with Theresa Russell and Gary Oldman.
Theatre 3: “Patty Hearst” (Paul Schrader), with Natasha Richardson.
Theatre 4: “Who Framed Roger Rabbit” (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 6: “Eight Men Out” (John Sayles). From Oct. 7: To be announced.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 6: “Elvira: Mistress of the Dark” (James Signorelli), with Elvira. From Oct. 7: “Clara’s Heart” (Robert Mulligan), with Whoopi Goldberg.
Theatre 3: “Heartbreak Hotel” (Chris Columbus), with David Keith, Tuesday Weld, and Charlie Schlatter.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through Oct. 4: “Eight Men Out” (John Sayles).
From Oct. 5: “Debajo del Mundo” (“Under the World;” Beda Docampo Feijoo and Juan Bautista Stagnora; an Argentine film, in Spanish).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
“The Last Temptation of Christ” (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
“Big” (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
“Tucker: The Man and His Dream” (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Through Oct. 6: “Moon Over Parador” (†).
From Oct. 7: “Imagine: John Lennon” (Andrew Solt), a documentary.

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
“Babette’s Feast” (†).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
“Miles from Home” (Gary Sinise), with Richard Gere and Kevin Anderson.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
“Crossing Delancey” (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.

Loews Paramount, B’way at 61st. (247-5070)
“Eight Men Out” (John Sayles).

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B’way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: “The Thin Blue Line” (†).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 8: “Bagdad Café” (†). From Oct. 9: “Salaam Bombay!” (Mira Nair; in Hindi).
Theatre 3: Through Oct. 9: “Boyfriends and Girlfriends” (“L’Ami de Mon Amie”) (†). From Oct. 10: “Red Sorghum” (Zhang Yimou; in Mandarin).

Cinema Studio I and 2, B’way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 8: “Matador” (†). From Oct. 9: “Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie” (Marcel Ophuls; in English, French, German, and Spanish), a four-hour-and-twenty-seven-minute documentary.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 8: “Wings of Desire” (“Der Himmel über Berlin”) (†). From Oct. 9: “Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie.”

Regency, B’way at 67th. (724-3700)
“Gorillas in the Mist” (Michael Apted), with Sigourney Weaver.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B’way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: “Elvira: Mistress of the Dark” (James Signorelli), with Elvira.
Theatre 2: “A Fish Called Wanda” (†).
Theatre 3: “Crossing Delancey” (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.
Theatre 4: “Married to the Mob” (†).
Theatre 5: Through Oct. 6: “Sweet Hearts Dance” (Robert Greenwald), with Don Johnson, Susan Sarandon, Jeff Daniels, and Elizabeth Perkins. From Oct. 7 (tentative): “Imagine: John Lennon” (Andrew Solt), a documentary.
Theatre 6: “Memories of Me” (Henry Winkler), with Billy Crystal, Alan King, and JoBeth Williams.

METRO CINEMA I AND 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "Dead Ringers" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 6: "Moon Over Parador" (†). From Oct. 7: "Punchline" (David Seltzer), with Sally Field and Tom Hanks.

OLYMPIA I AND II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: Through Oct. 6: "Midnight Run" (†). From Oct. 7: "Alien Nation" (Graham Baker), with James Caan and Mandy Patinkin.

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 6: "Running on Empty" (†). From Oct. 7: "Clara's Heart" (Robert Mulligan), with Whoopi Goldberg.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

CRITERION CENTER, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Coming to America" (directed by John Landis), with Eddie Murphy.

Theatre 2: "Messenger of Death" (J. Lee Thompson), with Charles Bronson.

Theatre 3: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund.

Theatre 4: Through Oct. 6: "Tougher than Leather" (Rick Rubin), with Run-D.M.C.; and "Nightfall." From Oct. 7: "Alien Nation" (Graham Baker), with James Caan and Mandy Patinkin.

Theatre 5: "Die Hard" (†).

Theatre 6: "Sweet Hearts Dance" (Robert Greenwald), with Don Johnson, Susan Sarandon, Jeff Daniels, and Elizabeth Perkins.

EMBASSY I, B'way at 46th. (757-2408)

"Heartbreak Hotel" (Chris Columbus), with David Keith, Tuesday Weld, and Charlie Schlatter.

EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 2: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

Theatre 3: "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†).

Theatre 4: "Married to the Mob" (†).

LOEWS ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"Elvira: Mistress of the Dark" (James Signorelli), with Elvira.

MOVIELAND, B'way at 47th. (757-8320)

"Gorillas in the Mist" (Michael Apted), with Sigourney Weaver.

NATIONAL TWIN, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: Through Oct. 6: "Running on Empty" (†). From Oct. 7: "Clara's Heart" (Robert Mulligan), with Whoopi Goldberg.

Theatre 2: "Dead Ringers" (†).

WARNER, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)

Through Oct. 6: "Midnight Run" (†).

From Oct. 7: "Punchline" (David Seltzer), with Sally Field and Tom Hanks.

REVIVAL HOUSES

BIOGRAPH CINEMA, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

Oct. 3: To be announced.

Oct. 4-5: "The Ghost and Mrs. Muir" (1947; directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Gene Tierney and Rex Harrison; and "Heaven Can Wait" (1943; Ernst Lubitsch), with Gene Tierney and Don Ameche.

Oct. 6-8: "It Happened One Night" (1934; Frank Capra), with Claudette Colbert, Clark Gable, Walter Connolly, Roscoe Karns, and Alan Hale; and "His Girl Friday" (1940; Howard Hawks), with Rosalind Russell, Cary Grant, and Ralph Bellamy.

Oct. 9-11: "Palm Beach Story" (1942; Preston Sturges), with Claudette Colbert, Joel McCrea, Mary Astor, and Rudy Vallée; and "Midnight" (1939; Mitchell Leisen), with Claudette Colbert, Don Ameche, and John Barrymore.

From Oct. 12: "Theodora Goes Wild" (†) and "Together Again" (†).

CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through Oct. 4: "Tokyo Pop" (1988; Fran Rubel Kuzui), with Carrie Hamilton; and "Rock 'n' Roll High School" (1979), with the Ramones.

Oct. 5-6: "Dead Cert" (1974; Tony Richardson); and "Coup de Torchon" ("Clean Slate;" 1981; Bertrand Tavernier; in French), with Philippe Noiret, Isabelle Huppert, Jean-Pierre Marielle, and Stéphane Audran.

Oct. 7-8: "North by Northwest" (1959; Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant, Eva Marie Saint, James Mason, Leo G. Carroll, and Martin Landau; "Young and Innocent" ("The Girl Was Young;" 1937; Alfred Hitchcock), with Derrick de Marney, Nova Pilbeam, Basil Radford, Percy Marmont, and Mary Clare; and "Sabotage" ("The Woman Alone;" 1936; Alfred Hitchcock), with Sylvia Sidney, Oscar Homolka, and Desmond Tester.

Oct. 9: "King Lear" (1988; Jean-Luc Godard); and "Passion" (1983; Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Isabelle Huppert and Hanna Schygulla.

Oct. 10-11: "Lolita" (1962; Stanley Kubrick), with Sue Lyon, James Mason, Peter Sellers, and Shelley Winters; and "The Loved One" (1965; Tony Richardson), with Robert Morse.

From Oct. 12: "A Night at the Opera" (†); and "A Day at the Races" (1937; Sam Wood), with the Marx Brothers.

FILM FORUM 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)

Oct. 3: To be announced.

Oct. 4: "Call Her Savage" (1932; John Francis Dillon), with Clara Bow and Gilbert Roland; and "Ten Cents a Dance" (1931; Lionel Barrymore), with Barbara Stanwyck and Ricardo Cortez.

Oct. 5: A compilation of musical numbers featuring female stars of the late twenties and early thirties.

Oct. 6: "The Wild Party" (1929 †); and "Sweetie" (1929; Frank Tuttle), with Nancy Carroll, Helen Kane, and Jack Oakie.

Oct. 7-8: "Our Dancing Daughters" (1928; Harry Beaumont), with Joan Crawford and Johnny Mack Brown; "Our Modern Maidens" (†); and "Our Blushing Brides" (†).

Oct. 9: "Wings" (1927; William A. Wellman; a silent film), with Clara Bow and Buddy Rogers; and "The Boob" (1926; William A. Wellman; a silent film), with George K. Arthur and Gertrude Olmsted.

Oct. 10: "Love 'em or Leave 'em" (1926; Frank Tuttle; a silent film), with Evelyn Brent, Louise Brooks, and Osgood Perkins; "Running Wild" (1927; Gregory La Cava; a silent film), with W. C. Fields and Mary Brian; and "Orchids and Ermine" (†).

Oct. 11: "Manslaughter" (1922; Cecil B. De Mille; a silent film), with Leatrice Joy; "A Fool There Was" (1914; Frank Powell; a silent film), with Theda Bara; and "Free to Love" (1925; Frank O'Connor; a silent film), with Clara Bow, Donald Keith, and Raymond McKee.

Oct. 12: "The Last Flight" (1931; William Dieterle), with Richard Barthelmess and Johnny Mack Brown; and "The Miracle Woman" (†).

THALIA SOHO, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)

Oct. 3: To be announced.

Oct. 4: "Two Thousand Maniacs" (1964; Herschell Gordon Lewis), with Connie Mason; and "The Sadist" (1963; James Landis).

Oct. 5: "Baby Doll" (1956; Elia Kazan), with Karl Malden, Carroll Baker, Eli Wallach, and Mildred Dunnock; and "Pinky" (1949; Elia Kazan), with Jeanne Crain, William Lundigan, Ethel Barrymore, and Ethel Waters.

Oct. 6: "Lost Boundaries" (1949; Alfred Werker), with Beatrice Pearson and Mel Ferrer; and "Native Son" (1951; Pierre Chenal), with Richard Wright and Jean Wallace.

Oct. 7-8: "Blue Velvet" (1986; David Lynch), with Kyle MacLachlan, Isabella Rossellini, Dennis Hopper, and Laura Dern; and "Zelly and Me" (1988; Tina Rathborne), with Isabella Rossellini.

Oct. 9: "Cría!" (†); and "The Garden of Delights" (1971; Carlos Saura; in Spanish).

Oct. 10: "Mean Streets" (1973; Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro and Harvey Keitel; and "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore" (†).

Oct. 11: "The Rules of the Game" (1939; Jean Renoir; in French), with Marcel Dalio and Nora Gregor; and "La Chienne" (1931; Jean Renoir; in French), with Michel Simon.

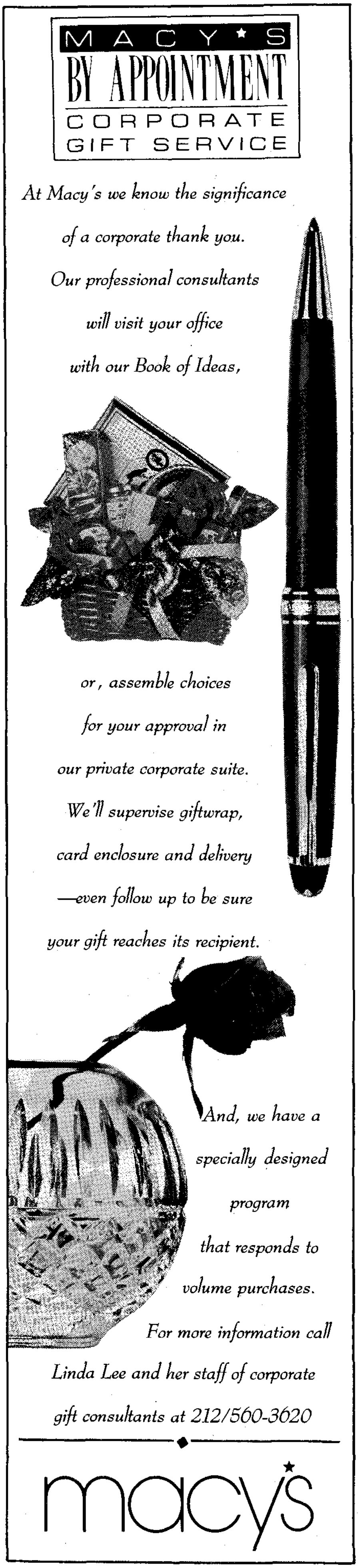
Oct. 12: "Cruising" (†); "Un Chant d'Amour" (1950); and "The Outlaw" (†).

THEATRE 80 ST. MARKS, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Oct. 3: To be announced.

Oct. 4: "The Criminal Code" (1931; Howard Hawks), with Walter Huston, Phillips Holmes, and Constance Cummings; and "Crime and Punishment" (1935; Josef von Sternberg), with Edward Arnold and Peter Lorre.

Oct. 5: "Heaven Can Wait" (1943; Ernst



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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Lubitsch), with Gene Tierney and Don Ameche; and "Rings on Her Fingers" (1942; Rouben Mamoulian), with Gene Tierney, Henry Fonda, Laird Cregar, and Spring Byington.

Oct. 6: "Lust for Life" (1956; Vincente Minnelli), with Kirk Douglas and Anthony Quinn; and "The Agony and the Ecstasy" (1965; Carol Reed), with Charlton Heston and Rex Harrison.

Oct. 7-8: "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1919; Robert Wiene; a German silent film), with Werner Krauss, Conrad Veidt, Lil Dagover, and Friedrich Feher; and "M" (1932; Fritz Lang; in German), with Peter Lorre.

Oct. 9: "Deception" (1946; Irving Rapper), with Bette Davis, Paul Henreid, and Claude Rains; and "Beyond the Forest" (1949; King Vidor), with Bette Davis, Joseph Cotten, and David Brian.

Oct. 10: "Rancho Notorious" (†) and "Destry Rides Again" (†).

Oct. 11: "The Exterminating Angel" (1962; Luis Buñuel; in Spanish), with Silvia Pinal; and "That Obscure Object of Desire" (1977; Luis Buñuel; *in French*), with Fernando Rey, Carole Bouquet, and Angela Molina.

Oct. 12: "La Traviata" (1983; Franco Zeffirelli; in Italian), with Teresa Stratas and Placido Domingo; and "Otello" (1986; Franco Zeffirelli; in Italian), with Placido Domingo.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490; a limited number of tickets are available to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing.)

THEATRE I: Oct. 3 at 2 and 6: To be announced. . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 2:30: "No Love for Johnnie" (1961; directed by Ralph Thomas), with Peter Finch, Stanley Holloway, and Mervyn Johns. . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 6: "Woman in a Dressing Gown" (1957; J. Lee Thompson), with Yvonne Mitchell, Anthony Quayle, and Sylvia Syms. . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 2:30: "The Pumpkin Eater" (1964; Jack Clayton), with Anne Bancroft, Peter Finch, and James Mason. . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 6 and Oct. 7 at 2:30: "Room at the Top" (1959; Jack Clayton), with Laurence Harvey, Simone Signoret, and Heather Sears. . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 6: "The Pumpkin Eater." . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 1: "Girl on Approval" (1962; Charles Frend), with Rachel Roberts, James Maxwell, and Annette Whiteley. . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 3: "The Angry Silence" (1960; Guy Green), with Richard Attenborough, Pier Angeli, and Michael Craig. . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 5: "Saturday Night and Sunday Morning" (1960; Karel Reisz), with Albert Finney, Shirley Anne Field, and Rachel Roberts. . . . ¶ Oct. 9 at 1: "Kes" (1969; Ken Loach), with David Bradley and Colin Welland. . . . ¶ Oct. 9 at 3: "Women of Twilight" (1952; Gordon Parry), with Freda Jackson, Rene Ray, and Laurence Harvey. . . . ¶ Oct. 9 at 5: "A Kind of Loving" (1962; John Schlesinger), with Alan Bates, June Ritchie, and Thora Hird. . . . ¶ Oct. 10 at 2:30: "Our Mother's House" (1967; Jack Clayton), with Dirk Bogarde, Margaret Brooks, and Pamela Franklin. . . . ¶ Oct. 10 at 5: "Jigsaw" (1962; Val Guest), with Jack Warner and Ronald Lewis. . . . ¶ Oct. 11 at 2:30: "Women of Twilight." . . . ¶ Oct. 11 at 6: "Girl on Approval."

THEATRE 2: Oct. 4 at 3: "Pretty Baby" (1978; Louis Malle), with Brooke Shields, Keith Carradine, and Susan Sarandon. . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 6: "The Sacrifice" (1986; Andrei Tarkovsky; in Swedish, with English subtitles), with Erland Josephson and Susan Fleetwood. . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 2:30: "The Postman Always Rings Twice" (1981; Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson, Jessica Lange, and John Colicos. . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 5:30: "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" (1988; Philip Kaufman), with Daniel Day-Lewis, Juliette Binoche, and Lena Olin. . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 3: "Cries and Whispers" (1973; Ing*mar Bergman; in Swedish, with English* subtitles), with Harriet Andersson, Ingrid Thulin, and Liv Ullmann. . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 6: "Pretty Baby." . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 1: "Fanny and Alexander" (1983; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish, with English subtitles), with Eva Fröling, Erland Josephson, and Bertil Guve. . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 5: "The Postman Always Rings Twice." . . . ¶ Oct. 9 at 2: "Miss Lulu Bett" (1921; William deMille; a silent film), with Lois Wilson, Milton Sills, and Theodore Roberts. . . . ¶ Oct. 9 at 5: "Male and Female" (1919; Cecil B. De Mille; a silent film), with Lila Lee, Theodore Roberts, and Raymond Hatton. . . . ¶ Oct. 10 at 3: "Miss Lulu Bett." . . . ¶ Oct. 10 at 6:30: "Oklahoma" (1955; Fred Zinnemann), with Gordon MacRae, Gloria Grahame, and Shirley Jones. . . . ¶ Oct. 11 at 3: "Wings" (1916; Mauritz Stiller; a silent film), with Lars Hanson, Egil Eide, and Lili Bech; and "Stiller, Garbo, & I" (1987; Claes Olsson and Alvaro Pardo; in Finnish, with English subtitles), a documentary.

New York Film Festival—The final programs in a series of international films—At **ALICE TULLY HALL:** Oct. 3 at 6:15: "A Winter Tan" (Jackie Burroughs, Louise Clark, John Frizzell, John Walker, and Aerlyn Weissman; Canada). . . . ¶ Oct. 3 at 9:15 and Oct. 4 at 6:15: "Jacob" (Mircea Daneliuc; Rumania). . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 9:15: "36 Fillette" (Catherine Breillat; France). . . . ¶ Oct. 5 at 6:15: "Golub" (Jerry Blumenthal and Gordon Quinn; United States) and "Falkenau" (Emil Weiss; France). . . . ¶ Oct. 5 at 9:15: "Hard Times" (João Botelho; Portugal). . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 6:15: "Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie" (Marcel Ophuls; United States). . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 6:15: "36 Fillette." . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 9:15 and Oct. 8 at 11:3 "Salaam Bombay" (Mira Nair; India). . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 2: "The Onset of an Unknow Age" (1967; Andrei Smirnov and Lariss Shepitko; U.S.S.R.). . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 4: "Har Times." . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 6:30: "Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie." . . . **AVERY FISHER HALL:** Oct. 9 at 8:3 "Red Sorghum" (Zhang Yimou; People' Republic of China). (For tickets, call 362 1911.)

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35t Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)

RIKLIS THEATRE: Oct. 5 at 2:30: "Hans Christia Andersen" (1952; Charles Vidor), wit Danny Kaye. . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 2:30: "Th Gang's All Here" (1943; Busby Berkeley with Alice Faye, Carmen Miranda, Charlotte Greenwood, and James Ellison. . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 2:30: "The Fall of the Roma Empire" (1964; Anthony Mann), with Sophia Loren and Stephen Boyd. . . . ¶ Fro Oct. 7 at 7:30: A retrospective of films b American independent filmmakers, 1978 1988.

WARNER COMMUNICATIONS SCREENING ROOM Through Oct. 7: Continuous showing of forty-six videotapes on the subject of th media and the Vietnam War. . . . ¶ Fro Oct. 8 at noon: A retrospective of films b American independent filmmakers, 1978 1988.

Collective for Living Cinema, 41 White St. (925 2111)—Through Oct. 6, at 6 and 8: "Can Toads: An Unnatural History" (1988; Mar Lewis) and three films by Jane Campion . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 8: A program of films by Franco Marinai and David Michalak, who will b present. . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 8: "Stripped Bare: Look at Erotic Entertainers" (1988; Caitli Manning). . . . ¶ Oct. 9 at 8: A program o films by new filmmakers. . . . ¶ Oct. 10 at 7 "A Bronx Morning" (1931; Jay Leyda) an "The Naked City" (1948; Jules Dassin) . . . ¶ Oct. 11 at 7: "Gods of the Plague (1969; Rainer Werner Fassbinder; i German, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Oct 12 at 7: "Love" (1970; Karoly Makk; i Hungarian, with English subtitles), with Li Darvas.

Asia Society, 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. (517 2742)—A program of films from Hong Kong in Cantonese, with English and Chinese subtitles. Oct. 7 at 3: "Wonder Women" (1987 Kam Kwok Leung). . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 7 "Health Warning" (1983; Kirk Wong). . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 3: "Gangs" (1988; Lawrence A Mon). . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 7: "Peking Oper Blues" (1987; Tsui Hark).

French Institute–Alliance Française, 22 E. 60t St. (355-6100)—Oct. 5 at 2, 6, and 8:45 "Escalier C" (1984; Jean-Charles Tacchella in French, with English subtitles), wit Robin Renucci, Jean-Pierre Bacri, and Catherine Leprince. . . . ¶ Oct. 12 at 2, 6, an 8:45: "The Eagle with Two Heads" (1947 Jean Cocteau; in French, with English subtitles), with Edwige Feuillère and Jean Marais.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(Unsigned notes are by Pauline Kael; others are by Roger Angell, Penelope Gilliatt, and Terrence Rafferty.)

Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore (1975)—Ellen Burstyn stars in this Martin Scorsese comedy, from an original script by Robert Getchell, about a thirty-five-year-old widow who sets out with her young son to make a new life. Full of funny malice and breakneck vitality, it's absorbing and intelligent even when the issues it raises get all fouled up. With Harvey Keitel, Kris Kristofferson, Valerie Curtin, Lelia Goldoni, Lane Bradbury, Diane Ladd, Jodie Foster, and, as the son, wire-drawn little Alfred Lutter, who has crack comedy timing. (Thalia SoHo; Oct. 10.)

Babette's Feast—In a village on Denmark's gray, blustery Jutland peninsula, sometime in the eighteen-eighties, Babette (Stéphane Audran), the French servant of a pair of elderly unmarried sisters (Birgitte Federspiel and Bodil Kjer), prepares a special dinner for her employers and their guests—a lavish, one-time-only orgy of haute cuisine served to a group of devout Lutherans who are used to receiving the Lord's bounty in the form of grim little slabs of boiled fish. Adapting one of Isak Dinesen's "Anecdotes of Destiny," Gabriel Axel, the writer-director, tells this simple tale simply. He establishes a lulling, bedtime-story tone right from the start, perhaps too successfully: our eyelids begin to seem very heavy after twenty minutes or so. The whole thing turns out to be about the consolations of art, and the union of "righteousness and bliss." The film is more righteous than blissful: a more austere celebration of the pleasures of the senses would be difficult to imagine. In Danish and French. —T.R. (Carnegie Screening Room. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; through Oct. 6.)

Bagdad Café—After an argument with her husband on a godforsaken stretch of highway at the edge of the Mojave Desert, a fat German tourist named Jasmin (Marianne Sägebrecht) checks into a crummy motel attached to the equally crummy Bagdad Café. This movie, the first in English by the German director Percy Adlon (whose 1985 "Sugarbaby" was also a vehicle for Sägebrecht), is filled with eccentrics who are apparently meant to be lovable. The rather precious conceit of the film is that Jasmin somehow brings the outcast character together in a kind of extended family; b the end, the Bagdad Café has been transformed into a popular roadside cabaret, wit everyone contributing a specialty (Jasmi does magic tricks). The American performer are trapped in a movie that treats ther as merely exotic—waxwork grotesques waiting to be animated by a mysterious German touch. Eleonore Adlon and Christopher Doherty collaborated with the directo on the screenplay. With CCH Pounder, Jac Palance, and Christine Kaufmann.—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza; through Oct. 8.)

Big—A formula fantasy film that has been directed very gently and tactfully by Penny Marshall; she sleepwalks you through the script (by Gary Ross and Anne Spielberg) about a twelve-year-old boy who wishes he were big and is magically given the body of a man in his thirties—Tom Hanks. There are neat, flaky moments, but everything has a tepid inevitability, and even as you smile you may be groaning inwardly, because "Big" is dedicated to awakening the child in all of us. Of course, the Hanks character isn't ready to function as an adult; he wants to go back.

The movie wants to go back, too. It's nostalgic for childhood, for suburbia, for innocent fun. (It isn't about kids wanting to be big; it's about grownups feeling little.) In its wholesome way, "Big" is selling the slick wonders of immaturity. With the slyly sexy Elizabeth Perkins, and good comic work by Robert Loggia and Jared Rushton. Also with John Heard, David Moscow, Jon Lovitz, and Mercedes Ruehl. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/27/88.) (Festival. . . . ¶ Waverly; through Oct. 6.)

Boyfriends and Girlfriends ("L'Ami de Mon Amie")—The sixth, and last, in Eric Rohmer's series of "Comedies and Proverbs" is a light romantic comedy set in Cergy-Pontoise, an overdesigned and self-contained modern suburb of Paris. In this bourgeois Forest of Arden, four completely unremarkable young people—two women, two men—reshuffle their affections so that each winds up with the "right" partner in the end. It's essentially the same leisurely comedy of self-knowledge that Rohmer has been making for nearly twenty years, but this time he treats his themes with a frivolous, casual air. He takes pleasure in the cleanness and brightness of this world, in the contented buzz of shoppers and office workers and Sunday picnickers, in the forthright way his characters pursue their comforts. "Boyfriends and Girlfriends" is fluff: it's artificial without being oppressive—a graceful, friendly abstraction. With Emmanuelle Chaulet, Sophie Renoir, François-Eric Gendron, and Eric Viellard. In French.—T.R. (7/25/88) (Lincoln Plaza; through Oct. 9.)

Cría! (1977)—A moving Spanish film, set in Madrid, with Ana Torrent as a grave nine-year-old called Ana. Her mother and her adult self are both played with great beauty by Geraldine Chaplin. Carlos Saura directed, and wrote the screenplay himself. Surrounded by deaths—of her mother, of her father, of her guinea pig—the child has a delicate sense of play; there is a marvellous scene in which she and her sisters dress up and make up and talk as they imagine grownups do when alone together. In Spanish.—P.G. (Thalia SoHo; Oct. 9.)

Cruising (1980)—Al Pacino as an undercover cop in search of a psychopathic killer who preys on patrons of the heavy-leather homosexual bars of the West Village. The picture's persistent confusions of theme and plot encourage our ignorance and our prurient fear of these matters. Director William Friedkin's careless, trashy moral appears to be that homosexuality is catching and inescapably violent, which is meant only to shock and to sell. With Paul Sorvino, Richard Cox, Don Scardino, and Karen Allen.—R.A. (Thalia SoHo; Oct. 12.)

Dead Ringers—David Cronenberg's psychological thriller tells a lurid story with chilling, clinical austerity. It's about identical twins, Beverly and Elliot Mantle (both played by Jeremy Irons), who have shared everything about their lives since childhood: they live together, practice gynecology together, and sleep with the same women. They look at the world and see only each other; they're dying of self-reflection. When the more sensitive of the twins, Bev, tries to break the pattern, to establish some real emotional link to the world outside, the attempt is doomed. He falls in love with an actress named Claire Niveau (Geneviève Bujold), but he can't handle the pressures and uncertainties of an adult relationship. He retreats into drug addiction and madness, and carries his brother with him. Irons's performance is daring: he turns himself into a nightmarish cartoon of decadence. As usual, Cronenberg's work gleams with intelligence, and goes as far as it can go. Yet there's something suspect about his imagination. In "Dead Ringers" the freakish material and the director's usual subtexts of sexual perversity and biological paranoia are deployed with an almost unnatural cunning. This movie about narcissism keeps turning further and further inward, and it makes us do the same. Cronenberg stirs up emotions that are so threatening, so overpowering, that we can respond only by withdrawing. The film affects us like a particularly upsetting visit to the doctor. The script, by the director and

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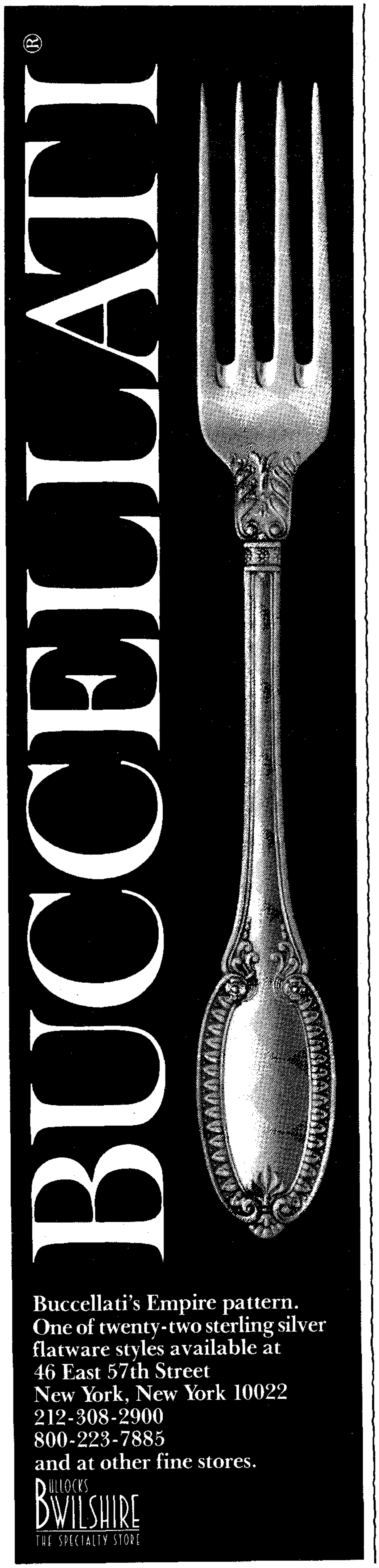
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IN BRIEF—Cont'd

Norman Snider, is loosely based on the novel "Twins," by Bari Wood and Jack Geasland, which was itself inspired by the real-life story of the Marcus twins, New York gynecologists who were found dead together in an East Side apartment in 1975. Cinematography by Peter Suschitzky; the excellent score is by Howard Shore.—T.R. (10/3/88) (Gramercy, Gotham Cinema, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

Destry Rides Again (1939)—George Marshall directed this satiric revitalization of a 1932 Tom Mix Western, based on a Max Brand novel, and Marlene Dietrich plays Frenchy, the quixotic harlot of the frontier saloon. By taking her spangles and feathers into the Old West and dropping her sultry voice to a howling baritone, Dietrich revitalized her own career. James Stewart is charming and even a little bit sexy as the mild-mannered Destry. With a large group of people who all contribute to the flavor, some in good-sized parts (Mischa Auer, Brian Donlevy, Charles Winninger, Una Merkel, Samuel Hinds) and in lesser parts (Jack Carson, Allen Jenkins, Irene Hervey, Warren Hymer, and Billy Gilbert). Script by Felix Jackson, Gertrude Purcell, and Henry Myers. Dietrich sings "Li'l Joe the Wrangler," "You've Got That Look That Leaves Me Weak," and "The Boys in the Back Room"—all by Frank Loesser and Frederick Hollander. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 10.)

Die Hard—A formula action picture, but with the extra-potency formula. It has the sweatiest hero, the most sinister bad guys (with the thickest foreign accents), the silliest plot twists, the loudest explosions, the most gratuitous bursts of machine-gun fire. Bruce Willis plays John McClane, a New York cop battling a group of European terrorists who are holding his wife (Bonnie Bedelia) and her co-workers hostage on the thirtieth floor of a gleaming L.A. skyscraper (actually the Fox Plaza in Century City). The action is so grandiose and relentless that it's funny. The director, John McTiernan, has the right style for this sort of cheerfully stupid, super-kinetic comic-book violence. The problem with "Die Hard" isn't so much the physical overkill of the production as the emotional overkill of the script (by Jeb Stuart and Steven E. de Souza, from a novel by Roderick Thorp). By the end, there has been so much onscreen applause for McClane that the picture's "humanity" seems narcissistic and fake, like Oscar-night sentimentality. Also with Alan Rickman, who gives the character of the terrorists' leader a wonderful slimy elegance.—T.R. (8/8/88) (Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex; through Oct. 6. . . . ¶ Cinema II; through Oct. 10.)

A Fish Called Wanda—This caper comedy promises to embody the best of two different styles of British humor: its director, the seventy-seven-year-old Charles Crichton, made "The Lavender Hill Mob," one of the greatest of the Ealing comedies, and its writer, executive producer, and star, the towering John Cleese, was a member of the Monty Python group and the creator of the hilarious television series "Fawlty Towers." Its main characters are a very proper London barrister (Cleese) and three jewel thieves: a crafty, sexy American woman named Wanda (Jamie Lee Curtis); another American, Otto (Kevin Kline), who's violently Anglophobic and dumb as dirt; and Ken (the ex-Pythonite Michael Palin), a deranged stutterer who's perfectly happy to bump off old ladies but becomes inconsolable at the death of a small dog or a tropical fish. The movie has a fair number of laughs, but Crichton's direction is too drab and poky for the material. Every time "Wanda" threatens to take off into the realm of insane, head-splitting farce, as "Fawlty Towers" so often did, something seems to drag it down—some impulse toward stability and restraint, at odds with the script's spirit of manic invention.—T.R. (7/25/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

The Last Temptation of Christ—Martin Scorsese's film is based on an intense, rather ponderous novel by Nikos Kazantzakis that portrays Christ as a tormented prophet who has to choose between his human nature and his divine nature—who in order to fulfill his role as redeemer must reject the overpowering temptation to be merely a man. If we respond to anything in this movie it's to the idea of Scorsese wrestling with Kazantzakis's conception, thrashing manfully among the tangles of the novel's dense prose, trying to isolate some clear, intelligible meaning from this religious fever-dream. Scorsese hasn't managed to come up with a consistent visual style for the story, and the movie's intensity, over a span of two hours and forty minutes, is sputtering, fitful. The scenes meant to evoke the natural—the human—side of the story don't have much charge, and most of the actors look uncomfortable. (The drab modern idiom of Paul Schrader's dialogue is at least part of the problem.) This movie isn't a sacrilege; it's just an honorable mistake. With Willem Dafoe as Jesus, Harvey Keitel as Judas, Barbara Hershey as Mary Magdalene, and David Bowie as Pontius Pilate. Peter Gabriel composed the music.—T.R. (9/5/88) (Ziegfeld.)

Married to the Mob—Angela (Michelle Pfeiffer), the heroine of Jonathan Demme's crazy comedy, is married to an up-and-coming suburban gangster known as Frank the Cucumber (Alec Baldwin), and she doesn't feel good about her life; she's avid for ordinariness. When Frank is murdered by his boss, Tony the Tiger (Dean Stockwell), Angela gives away virtually the entire contents of her Long Island house and moves herself and her reluctant son into a cramped Lower East Side apartment, hoping that the mob will forget about her. Unfortunately, Tony the Tiger has the hots for her, the F.B.I. is tailing her, and Tony's insanely jealous wife, Connie (Mercedes Ruehl), is on the warpath. Pfeiffer's extraordinary performance is the movie's major pleasure; she makes both Angela's toughness and her goodness believable, funny, and touching. As usual, Demme is great at providing incidental pleasures, including a terrific score (with original music by David Byrne) and a superbly eccentric cast that features Matthew Modine, Trey Wilson, Joan Cusack, Tracey Walter, and David Johansen (as a priest). The vibrant cinematography is by Tak Fujimoto.—T.R. (8/22/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

Matador—Hugely entertaining. Everything is eroticized in this lush, clownish comedy by Pedro Almodóvar. The characters act out their wildest fantasies—or, like the handsome, wealthy young virgin Ángel (Antonio Banderas), try to act them out—and embarrass themselves. Ángel is training to be a bullfighter, but he faints at the sight of blood. He's such a supreme fantasist that he hallucinates and sees what happened in a recent series of murders—unluckily, he's fantasist enough to think that he committed them. It's all sumptuously sick and funny. Assumpta Serna plays a culmination of the scarlet-woman tradition of Joan Crawford, Rita Hayworth, Ava Gardner, and Anouk Aimée—all those flaming man-killers with their too vibrant smiles. And Almodóvar himself appears as a mad-genius couturier who messes up his curly hair before he appears in public. Also with Nacho Martínez, Eusebio Poncela, Carmen Maura, Eva Cobo, Julieta Serrano, and Chus Lampreave. Written by the director and Jesús Ferrero; cinematography by Ángel Luis Fernández. In Spanish. (5/16/88) (Cinema Studio; through Oct. 8. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; starting Oct. 7.)

Midnight Run—At first, Martin Brest's new film is content to be a pleasantly flaky buddy movie and to lean on the talents of its two stars, Robert De Niro and Charles Grodin. De Niro's Jack Walsh, an ex-cop who works for a weaselly L.A. bail bondsman (Joe Pantoliano), goes to New York to retrieve a white-collar crook named Jonathan Mardukas (Grodin), an accountant who upon learning that the corporation he worked for was an organized-crime front embezzled fifteen million dollars and gave almost all of it to charity. They travel across the country in a succession of vehicles, dodging federal agents, hit men, and a profoundly stupid rival bounty hunter (John Ashton). De Niro gets marvellous effects by seeming to be constantly suppressing anger and powerful physical energy. Grodin, a minimalist and a miniaturist, does all his acting with sneaky looks and minute variations in the tone of his flat, dull voice, and he creates a memorable comic character—a placid solid-citizen type who's much wilier and crazier than he appears to be. The two actors look as if they were genuinely enjoying each other. But as they get close to L.A. Brest starts pumping up his sweetly funny road movie with large-scale action scenes—it's as if he were afraid that a pair of superlative actors doing low-key character comedy wouldn't be enough entertainment for us. Also with Yaphet Kotto, Dennis Farina, Richard Foronjy, and Robert Miranda. Screenplay by George Gallo.—T.R. (8/8/88) (Manhattan Twin, Olympia, and Warner; through Oct. 6.)

The Miracle Woman (1931)—Barbara Stanwyck gives a peerless performance as a young evangelist—a girl from a religious background who is taken over by a carny promoter (Sam Hardy) and is developed into a big-time shear-the-sheep phenomenon, with her own church. Frank Capra directed this fictionalized version of the life of Aimee Semple McPherson. It was softened by a mawkish love story: the heroine is redeemed through her unselfish love for a blind aviator (David Manners, God help us all). But it's still a beauty, well staged and handsomely lighted, and with some intermittent good writing; the screenplay is by Jo Swerling. With Beryl Mercer and Russell Hopton. (Film Forum 2; Oct. 12.)

Moon Over Parador—Paul Mazursky's new comedy is awkward, dopey, and very likable. Richard Dreyfuss plays Jack Noah, a New York actor who is roped into impersonating the puppet dictator of a small Latin-American country called Parador. The central joke isn't that politics is theatre but that Jack treats this volatile situation as if it were simply an acting challenge, way off Broadway: he sees everything in actors' terms. This premise is too elaborate for Mazursky, but we're carried past the movie's many infelicities by his affection for actors; he seems to love their ridiculous qualities most of all. And Dreyfuss, who's in almost every scene, is wonderful. There probably isn't another actor who could make Jack Noah so transparently full of himself and yet so appealing. With Sonia Braga, Raul Julia, Jonathan Winters, and Fernando Rey. Mazursky himself (uncredited) plays the dictator's horrible mother, and practically steals his own movie. The script, by the director and Leon Capetanos, is based loosely on a 1939 Paramount film called "The Magnificent Fraud."—T.R. (9/19/88) (Art Greenwich Twin. . . . ¶ Manhattan Twin, Carnegie Hall Cinema, and Metro Cinema; through Oct. 6.)

A Night at the Opera (1935)—The Marx Brothers sometimes said that this was their best film; it isn't, but it was their greatest hit. Two beautifully stuffed American targets—grand opera and high society—are left dismantled, flapping like scarecrows. Sam Wood directed. The cast includes Groucho's perennial grande-dame inamorata, Margaret Dumont, the most stately of stooges. There are also the vocalizing lovers, Kitty Carlisle and Allan Jones, and the cruel villain, Walter Woolf King. The comedy has its classic sequence: the stateroom scene, which is widely regarded as the funniest five minutes in screen history. It will sustain you through the dreadful duets. (Cinema Village; starting Oct. 12.)

Orchids and Ermine (1927)—Lively, gifted Colleen Moore, the best comedienne of the silent flapper period, wore her dark hair short and straight with bangs—it was an almost abstract frame for the games she played with her eyes and mouth. No mere personality girl but a light, unaffected, inventive actress, in style she was a little like Buster Keaton. In this romantic comedy she's a telephone operator who has just about given up her hopes of landing a rich husband. She works in a swank New York hotel, which is called the Ritz but is actually the Plaza, and there's nostalgic charm in the sequences shot in and around the hotel and on top of an old double-decker Fifth Avenue bus. Jack Mulhall plays a young millionaire, and Gwen Lee and Sam Hardy are a gold-digger and a valet. There is a sequence at the hotel switchboard when a midget addresses Miss Moore—the "midget" is one of the first screen appearances of Mickey Rooney. Alfred Santell directed; the script is by Carey Wilson and Mervyn LeRoy; the wisecracking titles have a fine patina—they're by Ralph Spence. With Hedda Hopper as a modiste, and Yola D'Avril as another

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

IN BRIEF—*Cont'd*

telephone operator. Silent. (Film Forum 2; Oct. 10.)

Our Blushing Brides (1930)—The title is deceptive; it's a popular film of the period, about whether working girls ought to Take the Easiest Way or Wait for Mr. Right. Joan Crawford, Anita Page, and Dorothy Sebastian are the roommates who work in the same department store (the vivacious Crawford as a model, the other two as clerks). Their dreams of luxury get them in trouble with, respectively, Robert Montgomery, Raymond Hackett, and John Miljan. It's high-mindedly moral but not seriously so, with an arrest for theft, a suicide, a fashion show on a Long Island estate, and an Albertina Rasch ballet all tossed in together. Harry Beaumont directed; the writers were Bess Meredyth and a pre-Marxist John Howard Lawson. With Hedda Hopper, Martha Sleeper, Albert Conti, Edward Brophy, and, among the mannequins, Claire Dodd. (Film Forum 2; Oct. 7-8.)

Our Modern Maidens (1929)—The big-eyed, energetic young Joan Crawford in the jazz age. She and her friends give expensive parties where now and then someone jumps on a piano, sings a song, makes a speech, or does an imitation. With Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., as Crawford's young husband, Rod La Rocque as the older man of the world who complicates her life, Anita Page as the girl who complicates Fairbanks' life, and Edward Nugent and Josephine Dunn. One of the "shocking-youth" pictures that audiences flocked to; the surprise in this one is that Crawford leaves her husband and winds up with La Rocque. Directed by Jack Conway. A silent, though some prints had a musical score and sound effects. (Film Forum 2; Oct. 7-8.)

The Outlaw (1941)—As producer-director and bra designer, Howard Hughes managed to create the definitive burlesque of cowtown dramas, and without even trying. Jane Russell swings her bosom around and shows her love for frail, seedy Billy the Kid (Jack Buetel) by putting sand in his water flasks when he is setting out across the desert. To reciprocate, he ties her up with wet thongs and leaves her out in the sun. Walter Huston and Thomas Mitchell provide a little relief from the amorous games. Though completed in 1941, the film was tied up in heavily publicized censorship battles and wasn't shown until 1947. (Thalia SoHo; Oct. 12.)

Rancho Notorious (1952)—Not one of the films that Fritz Lang will be remembered for. Lang said that this Western was conceived for Marlene Dietrich (she plays an aging femme fatale, a retired dance-hall hostess who operates a hideout for outlaw gangs) but that by the time it was finished he and Dietrich had stopped speaking to each other. Financed by Howard Hughes, though on a small scale, it was shot mostly in the studio; the picture was to be called "Chuck-a-Luck" and Lang used the ballad "The Legend of Chuck-a-Luck" as an integral theme song, but afterward Hughes changed the title. (The picture was also recut.) Possibly even under the best of circumstances the mixture of Lang's conspiratorial motifs with the Western characters and locale might not have worked out. Arthur Kennedy is a cowpuncher obsessed with getting revenge for the rape and murder of his fiancée, and Mel Ferrer is Frenchy, a Western variant of Lang's master criminals. With Gloria Henry, William Frawley, Jack Elam, Dan Seymour, George Reeves, Lloyd Gough, and Fuzzy Knight. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 10.)

Running on Empty—Naomi Foner's screenplay is about the problems of a fugitive family: Mom and Dad (Christine Lahti and Judd Hirsch) have been on the run since 1971, when, as student activists, they helped blow up a campus building, not knowing that there was a man inside. They keep moving all over the country with their two sons (River Phoenix and Jonas Abry), changing their names and taking menial jobs so that they won't draw attention to themselves. The crisis comes when their older son (Phoenix), a musical prodigy, is noticed by a sympathetic teacher and encouraged to audition for Juilliard. The director, Sidney Lumet, buries everything that's original about the story, and leaves his hardworking performers bogged down in the mess, spinning their wheels. There's not a moment that feels authentic; instead of attending to detail, Lumet pumps the story full of gross, Oscar-worthy sentimentality. With Martha Plimpton, whose fresh, lively readings and expressions as the older son's girlfriend give some spark to most of her scenes.—T.R. (9/19/88) (Baronet, and 8th St. Playhouse. . . . ¶ Olympia, and National Twin; through Oct. 6.)

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Theodora Goes Wild (1936)—Irene Dunne was better in comedy than in her smug, sacrificial roles, and in this movie and "The Awful Truth" she was at her best. She's too bright, but she has energy, and this comedy about a small-town girl who writes a best-seller and charms a city sophisticate (Melvyn Douglas) has a corny vitality that almost passes for wit. Richard Boleslavsky directed, from Sidney Buchman's screenplay. With Thomas Mitchell and Spring Byington. (Biograph Cinema; starting Oct. 12.)

The Thin Blue Line—Errol Morris's trancelike, almost lyrical documentary tells the story of a 1976 cop-killing in Dallas and examines the process by which a man who is almost certainly innocent was convicted and sentenced to death for the crime. The movie's form is circular, spiralling, its obsessive, repetitive visual motifs echoed in Philip Glass's hauntingly monotonous score. In showing us the lies, the fears, the social pressures, the ulterior motives, the stubbornness, and the plain confusion that combined to produce the case against the unfortunate Randall Adams—whose fate is worthy of a Borges hero—Morris seems to be investigating not just this squalid murder but the very nature of untruth. His style is occasionally too fancy and elliptical for absolute clarity, but this is a powerful and thrillingly strange movie. Morris—who actually uncovered new evidence in the course of making the film—has turned Randall Adams' case into a kind of tabloid poetry, a meditation on uncertainty and the fascination of violence.—T.R. (9/5/88) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Together Again (1944)—The title refers to the earlier pairing of Irene Dunne and Charles Boyer in "Love Affair" and "When Tomorrow Comes." This time, she's a widow, a small-town mayor who doesn't know that she needs love, and he's a sculptor from the big city, commissioned to do a commemorative statue of her late husband. During their various misunderstandings, each becomes engaged to a high-school student, and a million laughs ensue, all of them from the people in the picture. With Charles Coburn, Mona Freeman, and Elizabeth Patterson. Directed by Charles Vidor. (Biograph Cinema; starting Oct. 12.)

Tucker: The Man and His Dream—There are marvellous moments throughout Francis Ford Coppola's biography of Preston Tucker (Jeff Bridges), a Midwestern inventor/entrepreneur who tried, and failed, to manufacture and market an innovative new automobile in the late forties. The style of "Tucker" is hyped-up forties Hollywood, and we believe, at first, that its intent is ironic, that Coppola is playing with America's optimistic, movie- and magazine-fuelled vision of itself in the postwar years. Bafflingly, this style doesn't change, or even modulate, when Tucker's bold enterprise starts to come apart, undermined by pressure from the government and the big three auto companies; the movie remains grandiose and artificial—all golden lighting and low, heroic angles. "Tucker" collapses in nostalgia, bad faith, and Capra-style populism. Also with Joan Allen, Martin Landau, Frederic Forrest, Mako, Lloyd Bridges (uncredited), and Dean Stockwell, who does a lovely, mysterious cameo as Howard Hughes. Screenplay by Arnold Schulman and David Seidler; cinematography by Vittorio Storaro.—T.R. (8/22/88) (57th St. Playhouse.)

Who Framed Roger Rabbit—This manic comedy, in which animated cartoon characters interact with live actors, is an amazing feat of entertainment engineering—like a Disneyland ride or a World's Fair movie. The setting is Los Angeles in 1947, and the screenplay, by Jeffrey Price and Peter Seaman, takes off from the fairly witty conceit that the cartoon characters, called Toons here, are ordinary contract players in the already skewed universe of the Hollywood studio system. These strange creatures become involved in a conventional forties mystery plot, featuring a seedy, hard-drinking private eye (Bob Hoskins). The director, Robert Zemeckis, and his small army of animators and special-effects artists mean to pay homage to the Hollywood animation of the thirties and forties, but the movie doesn't have the right spirit. Technology and plot mechanics labor mightily to evoke an aura of freedom and uninhibited joy—yet there's hardly a spontaneous moment in the film. Also with Christopher Lloyd, Joanna Cassidy, and Stubby Kaye. The funniest Toon, Roger's sireny wife, Jessica, speaks with Kathleen Turner's (uncredited) voice and sings with Amy Irving's. The director of animation was Richard Williams. Adapted, very loosely, from the novel "Who Censored Roger Rabbit?," by Gary K. Wolf.—T.R. (7/11/88) (Quad Cinema, and Embassy.)

The Wild Party (1929)—The manic, wide-eyed flapper Clara Bow in her first talkie, set in a women's college; she's a student and Fredric March is a young professor. It's silly stuff, yet charming. Clara Bow, whose vitality was awesome and was combined with a childlike vulnerability, was for her period something like what Marilyn Monroe was for hers. (And when she was past her peak she, too, was celebrated by intellectuals.) Bow's infantile sexuality is high-voltage; she's both repulsive and irresistible. Dorothy Arzner directed; with Joyce Compton, Jack Oakie, Shirley O'Hara, and Marceline Day. (Film Forum 2; Oct. 6.)

Wings of Desire ("Der Himmel über Berlin")—The director, Wim Wenders, who wrote the script with the collaboration of Peter Handke, has a theme: in an approximation of Rilke's words, "Joy has gone astray." We're told that "when the child was a child" stories held together. Now all we have is fragmentation, entropy. Two angels—Damiel (Bruno Ganz) and Cassiel (Otto Sander)—hover over the bleak, divided city and move among the forlorn Berliners, listening to what's in their minds: listening to the questions about existence that these people ask themselves. Our overhearing what the angels hear—the thoughts chanted on the track, all in even, quiet tones, as grayed out as the sunless skies—works on us like a tranquillizer. Eventually, Damiel falls in love with a beautiful French aerialist (Solveig Dommartin), and gives up his wings. With Peter Falk, who brings some funky warmth to the role of an American movie star, and Curt Bois as a sad-faced old man called Homer. The cinematography (tinted black-and-white, and color) is by Henri Alekan. This Franco-German production is in English, French, and German. (5/30/88) (Cinema Studio; through Oct. 8.)

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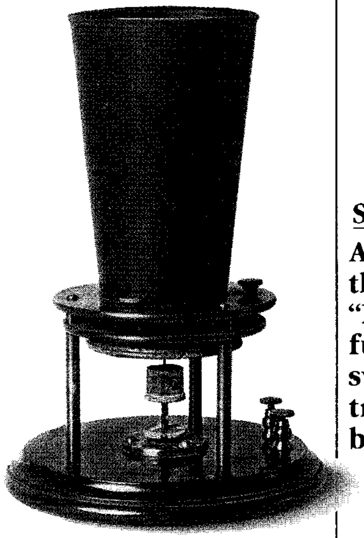

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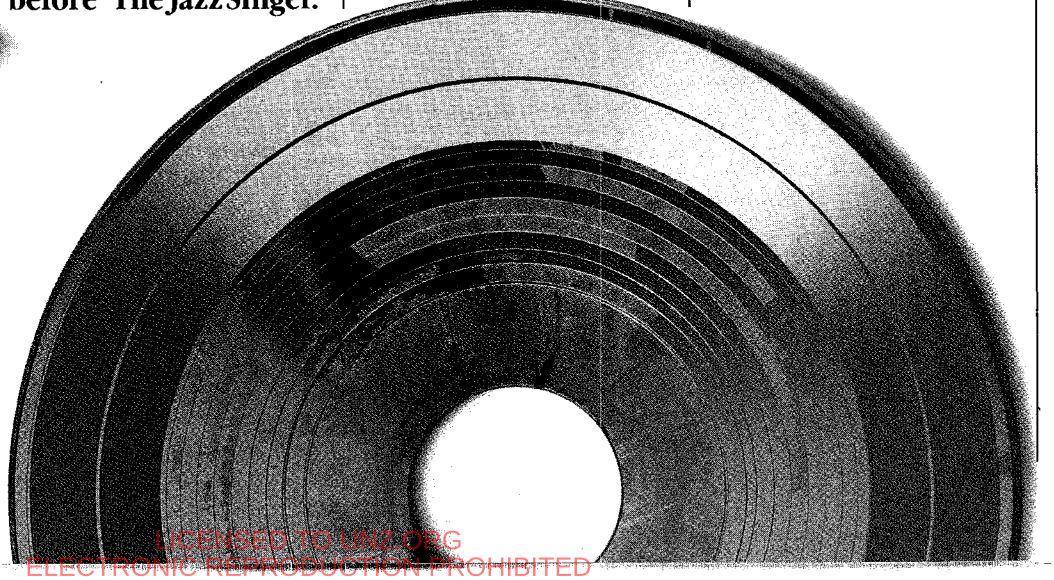

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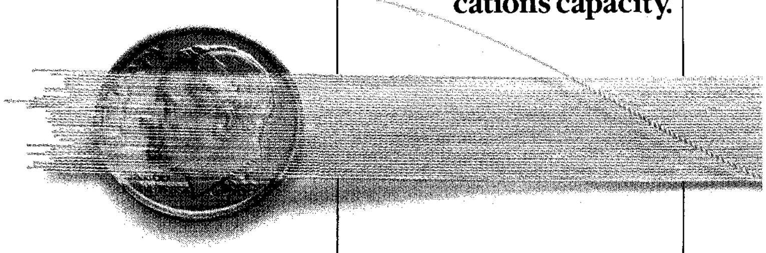

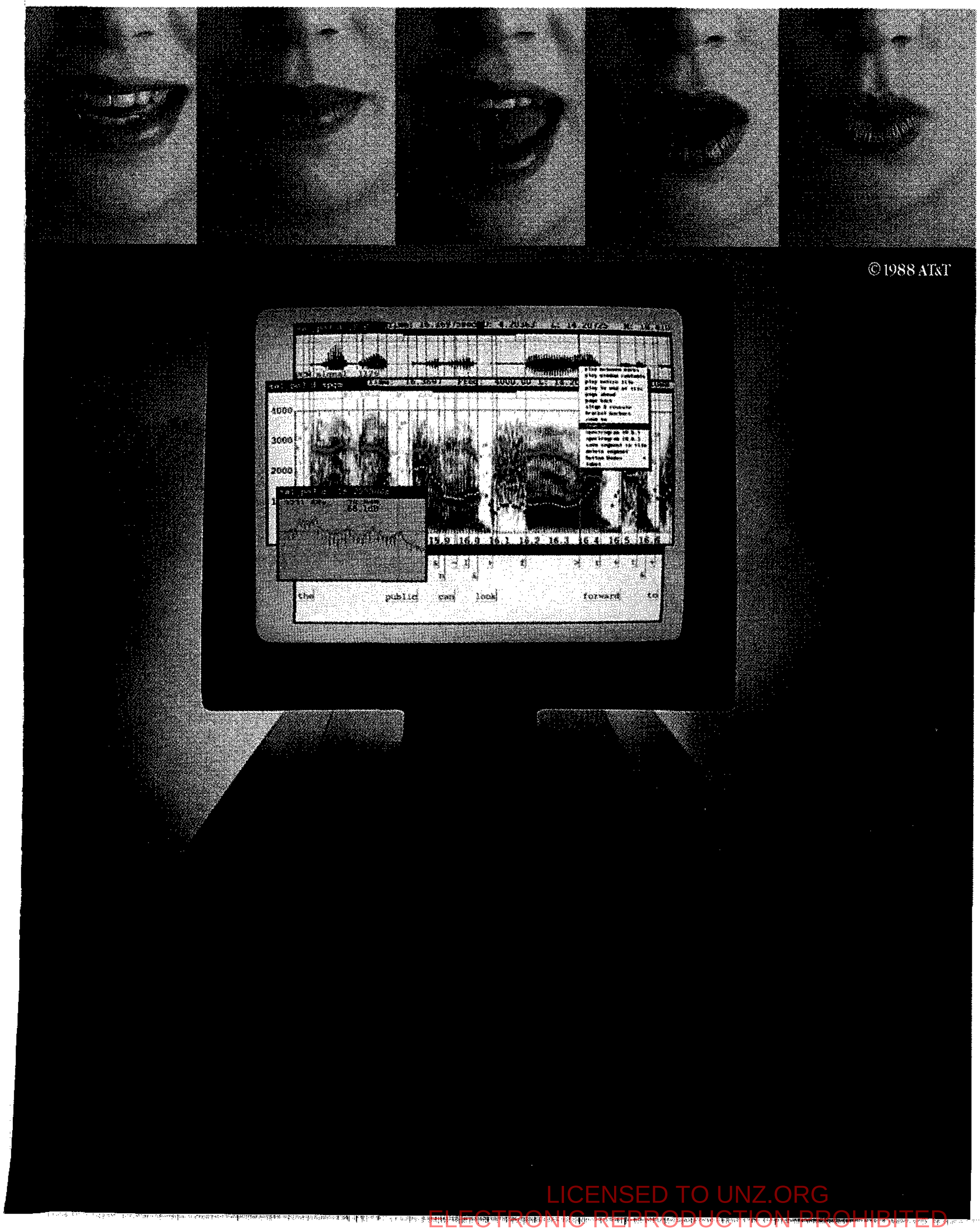

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

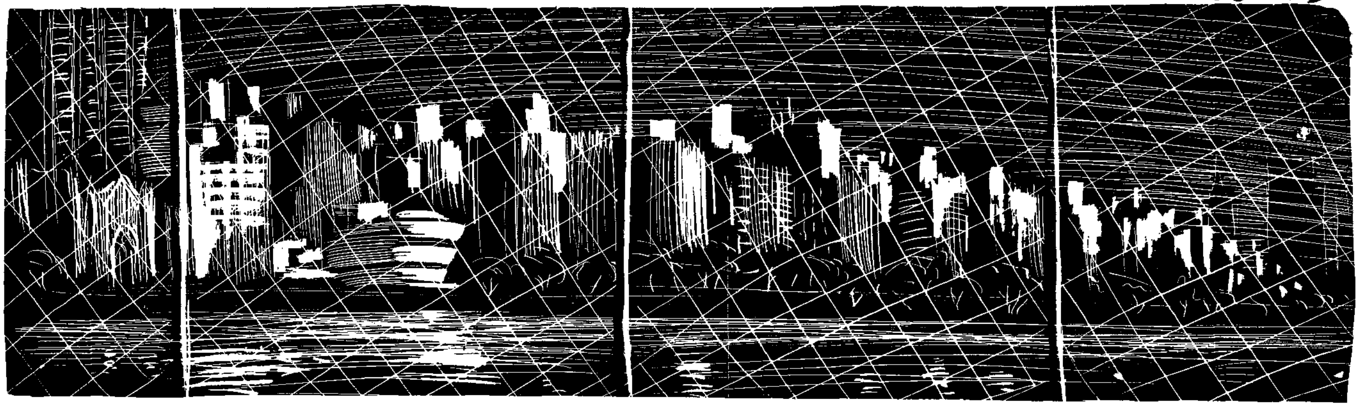
ON the basis of past performances, we can expect that only about half the eligible Americans will vote in November. Those who don't will have lots of rationalizations, among them that one person's vote really doesn't count for anything, and that there isn't much difference between the two political parties. These views aren't shared by the Third World, however, where the American election is monitored anxiously.

"We in the Third World are praying that Mr. Dukakis wins," a fifty-seven-year-old Tanzanian doctor said last week. "We like the Democrats," he added. "It's because of Kennedy." In much of the Third World, and especially in Latin America and in Africa, pictures of John F. Kennedy are still encountered in remote villages, often along with pictures of the Pope. And while Democratic candidates at home may want voters to forget Jimmy Carter, he is well remembered in Africa for being the first American President to visit black Africa officially and for supporting the movement that led to an independent Zimbabwe.

But there is also plenty of support in the Third World for a Bush victory. Earlier this year, an Indonesian political scientist who was eager for every scrap of news about the primaries—she was far more interested in them than most Americans were—expressed fervent hope that Bush would win it all. "We know him," she said. In the eyes of many in the Third World—generally the better-off politically and economically—being a Republican and an heir to Reagan is a plus for Bush. In Escalon and San Benito, wealthy residential neighborhoods in San Salvador, homeowners stepped onto their lawns and fired automatic rifles to register their joy when Reagan defeated Carter. An ocean away, in Malacañang, the Philippine White House, a party given by Imelda Marcos grew raucous with cheers at the news of Reagan's victory. Conscious of the power that the United States government had over their reign, the Marcoses had reportedly contributed to candidates from both parties, though they preferred the Republicans.

This year's election has already had repercussions in the Third World. It was when the polls showed Dukakis with a substantial lead that the South African government began to negotiate in earnest a settlement of the war in Angola and independence for Namibia. The correlation was direct: South Africa knew that its bargaining position would be substantially weakened if Dukakis occupied the White House. The Governor has called South Africa a "terrorist state" and said he will cut off covert aid to the UNITA guerrillas who are fighting the Angolan government. In Central America, those yearning for peace have become uneasy spectators of the electoral game to the north. "One reason there has not been more progress lately might be that everyone is waiting for the outcome of the American election," Costa Rica's President, Oscar Arias Sánchez, said recently about the Central American peace negotiations. That outcome will almost certainly tip the balance in Nicaragua. Bush is well known to be an ardent Contra supporter; Dukakis has declared his opposition to military aid for the Contras.

The general perception in the Third World—and an article of faith for many American liberals—is that the Democrats are less inclined to intervene in the Third World and are more sympathetic toward "national libera-



tion" movements to remove tyrants. But it was J.F.K. who launched the Bay of Pigs invasion, and, when that failed, his Administration hatched various schemes to assassinate Castro. A few years later, L.B.J. sent the Marines into the Dominican Republic. And, of course, "the best and the brightest," the men who took us into the Vietnam quagmire, were Democrats, many of them liberals.

A corollary view is that Republicans are more tolerant of dictators. This perception was reinforced by Jeane Kirkpatrick, a principal architect of the Reagan Administration's foreign policy, when she castigated the Carter Administration for its human-rights policy and, specifically, for having abandoned the Shah of Iran and Nicaragua's dictator, Anastasio Somoza. Kirkpatrick argued that even authoritarian regimes deserved Washington's backing if they were pro-American, and that such support could be given without our losing "our moral credentials." Reagan welcomed two pro-American dictators, South Korea's Chun Doo Hwan and Argentina's General Roberto Eduardo Viola, to the White House within six weeks after he moved in. And in 1981, when Ferdinand Marcos won a rigged election in the Philippines, Vice-President Bush, lifting his glass, said, "We love your adherence to democratic principle and to the democratic process." Later, the *Times* said in an editorial, "Even by the Reagan Administration's solicitous standards to allied dictators, that statement was a clanger."

But Democrats, too, have been solicitous. Carter and his wife were guests of the Shah at a lavish New Year's Eve gala in 1977, during which the Democratic President heralded Iran as "an island of stability." And Carter's Vice-President, Walter Mondale, clinked glasses with Ferdinand Marcos in Manila several years before Bush did. Indeed, the Carter Administration policy toward the Marcoses wasn't fundamentally different from the policies of the Nixon and Reagan Administrations. Moreover, contrary to what was expected—and, indeed, to the bewilderment and dismay of American conservatives—Marcos was toppled in no small measure because the Reagan Administration eventually abandoned him. "Thank goodness, it happened on a Republican watch," Richard Holbrooke, who had been Carter's Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, remarked to the *Times*. "If a Democrat had tried to do this, it would have split the country."

Underlying Holbrooke's remarks was what has become a tenet of American foreign policy: Republicans can go where Democrats fear to tread. Nixon's opening to China is probably the most notable example. What has constrained the Democrats' policy in the Third World is a fear of being accused of being soft on Communism. It's a hangover from the early years of the Cold War—from the "Who lost China?" debate, which wasn't really a debate but an accusation against the Democrats, on whose watch Mao came to power. We've since had "Who lost Vietnam?" and "Who lost Iran?," and partisans have begun warming up to fling charges of "Who lost Nicaragua?" This eagerness to assign blame grates in the Third World, where people resent the notion that their nations are the United States' to "lose."

Whatever the outcome in November, those who live in the Third World are likely to discover that they won't get what they're hoping for. American policy toward developing nations in the next four years is likely to be based less on any altruistic notion of what will benefit the economically impoverished and politically repressed than on what it has always been based on—what will be acceptable domestically, and what is perceived, however naïvely, to be in the best interests of Americans.

• •

St. Regis

WHEN we first heard that the Hotel St. Regis had closed its doors—just like that, almost overnight—we were shocked. Eventually, though, it became clear that the St. Regis was not going anywhere just yet, and the other day we decided to seize this reprieve and pay the old place a visit in its suspended state. The grand, gaudy main entrances, on Fifty-fifth Street, were sealed. A security guard ushered us in through the King Cole Restaurant doorway, down the block. Inside, on the mezzanine level, above an altogether vacant lobby, we found one office occupied—that of Peter Tischmann, who, according to the hotel directory, is vice-president and managing director for St. Regis–Sheraton, New York.

Mr. Tischmann, a hearty, bluff-speaking hotelier with a Teutonic accent, filled us in on the St. Regis's situation. The hotel was up for sale, he said, and discussions were under way with a number of interested parties. Until a sale could be completed, the St. Regis would remain shut. "We are dealing here with an eighty-four-year-old building that cannot mask its age," Mr. Tischmann went on. "There is still D.C. wiring in these walls. Many of the bathrooms contain the fixtures that John Jacob Astor put in when he built the place, in 1904. The plumbing is shot. The wiring is shot. The windows are old, and they let in far too much street noise. To see the St. Regis returned to the highest level of guest comfort would take eighteen months of restoration."

Mr. Tischmann invited us to walk around the hotel with him, and together we wandered back through the silent lobby. We passed into the King Cole Room, where, beneath the Maxfield Parrish mural, stood row upon row of richly upholstered chairs, looking like soldiers awaiting marching orders. We strode through scoured kitchen caverns that were absolutely bare. We rode an elevator to the St. Regis Roof and looked out over a midtown cityscape that was dominated by construction cranes and girders. "Hotelmen have a tendency to be sentimental," Mr. Tischmann murmured, staring down at Maxim's—formerly the Gotham and soon to be the Peninsula Hotel on Fifth. "The trick, of course, is to balance somehow the financial aspect with the sentimental ego."

We moved on. In a guest bathroom that Mr. Tischmann said was "typical," a huge old porcelain basin, an old-fashioned porcelain tub, and brass towel warmers did indeed look very tired. Back in the hallway, we spotted some ancient-looking outlets near the baseboard, and Mr. Tischmann explained that they were part of the hotel's original central-vacuum system—in the early days, chambermaids could plug their hoses in here and hook up to two enormous vacuums in the St. Regis basement.

We saved the Dalí Suite for last—a set of rooms named for Salvador Dalí, who lived in the St. Regis for fourteen years during the sixties and seventies. In the Dalí Suite, the bathroom was newly marbled and the bath came with a Jacuzzi. The living room had a fireplace. "Not a working fireplace," Mr. Tischmann explained. "Never a working fireplace. It was originally a very primitive air-conditioner. The air was drawn in here, and recirculated through filters in the wall. They're still here. See them? 'Purified air,' they called it in 1904." The Dalí Suite was still luxurious, but we were disappointed to find no trace of Dalí himself: not a litho, not a painting, not a cheap print—nothing.

We said goodbye to Mr. Tischmann, and, outside again, strolled past the St. Regis's street-level tenants: the Ambassador Florist, the St. Regis Pharmacy ("Pharmacy Will Remain Open During Hotel Renovation," a big sign above its window said), Gordon's Bookstore. There was a bullet-like hole in the bookstore's window. We decided to investigate.

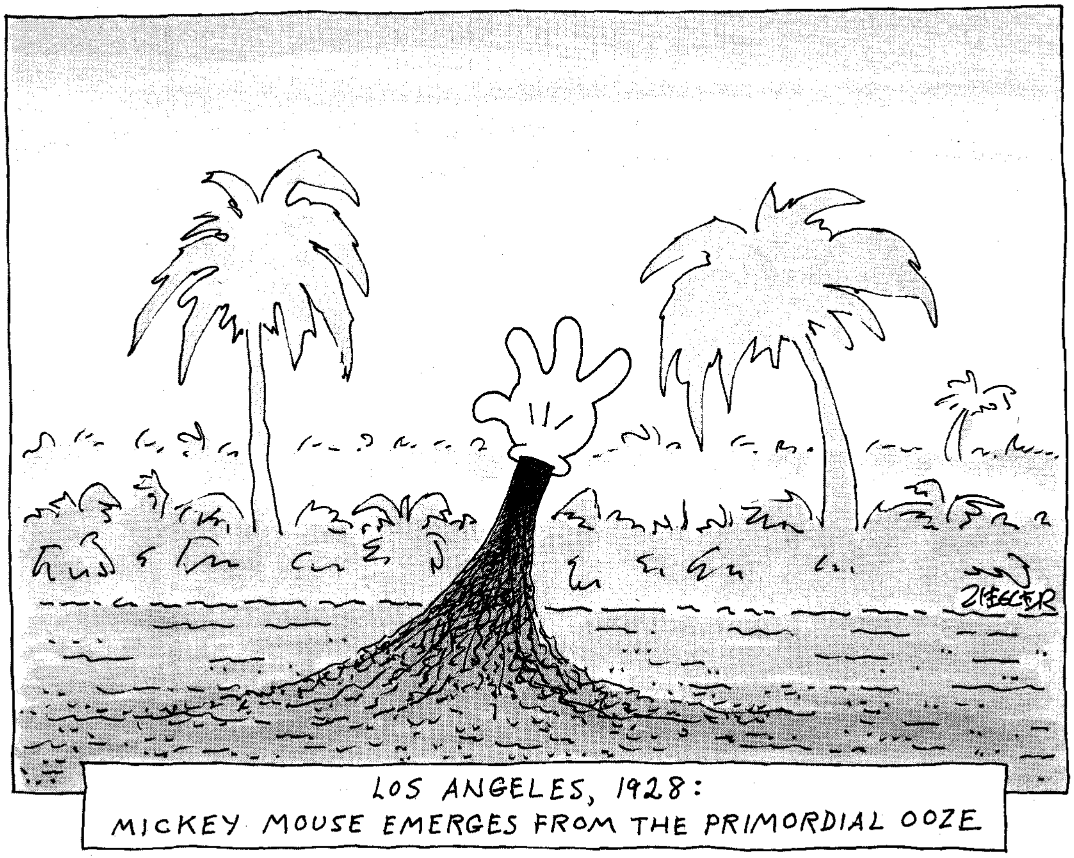
"Oh, it's just a BB-gun shot," Alice Stein, Gordon's proprietor, told us. "It's our second this year. I don't know what it means."

We inquired about the store's future plans.

"We're going out of business," Miss Stein said. "Our lease just ended, and I notified the hotel that we wouldn't renew. We moved here in 1965, from our original location, on Fifty-ninth Street off Fifth Avenue. That whole block came down—it's where the G.M. Building is now—but we got lucky and were offered a ten-year lease here, which was unheard of at that time, because every building in midtown, it seemed, was set to be torn down and replaced by a skyscraper. We never even met the big real-estate mogul who owned the hotel then, but he apparently felt that ours was the kind of store that should be in his hotel. And our business here has always been rather special. Cecil Beaton used to have an apartment in the hotel, and he would come in for his British paper. Alfred Hitchcock stayed at the hotel, and he also came in because we carried British papers. Of course, Dalí came in every day. We used to get many, many theatre people, too."

We asked Miss Stein about her history with Gordon's.

"I joined the company in 1946, on a trial basis, to see if I would like it," she said. "And I did. It was always a personal business. The store was started back in 1923, by Mr. Raphael Gordon—it was a magazine-and-newspaper shop then—at 32 East Fifty-ninth Street, down the block from the Savoy Plaza Hotel, and it stayed there until the move in 1965. Mr. Raphael Gordon had retired by then, and his son, William Gordon, and I were partners. During the war and just after, Mr. R. Gordon got magazines that no other magazine dealer could get. It was a talent, really, and, as a result, his customer list read like the *Social Register*. That little, tiny store, hedged in by Nedick's and Charlie's Shoe Shine Parlor, had the most extraordinary accounts. But things change, of course. We maintain many of those original Fifty-ninth Street accounts—those that are still alive—but the business since 1965 has been bound up with the hotel, and over the years the *hotel* has changed. I mean, take the King Cole Room. That used to be the hotel bar—wood-panelled, with a brass footrail, and that marvellous Parrish



LOS ANGELES, 1928: MICKEY MOUSE EMERGES FROM THE PRIMORDIAL OOZE

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painting. It was a gathering place, very inviting, very smart. At lunchtime, it would be jammed with men: in those days, women weren't admitted to the King Cole Room until after four in the afternoon. That was the policy." Miss Stein grinned. "You can imagine the business we got from the King Cole Room bar at lunchtime. Well, Sheraton came along and eventually turned the place into a ritzy restaurant. Took out the bar and the brass footrail. Put in a cocktail lounge just outside the King Cole Room door. Of course, the regulars disappeared. A hotel bar is a gathering place. A Sheraton cocktail lounge is a Sheraton cocktail lounge. We lost a lot of business."

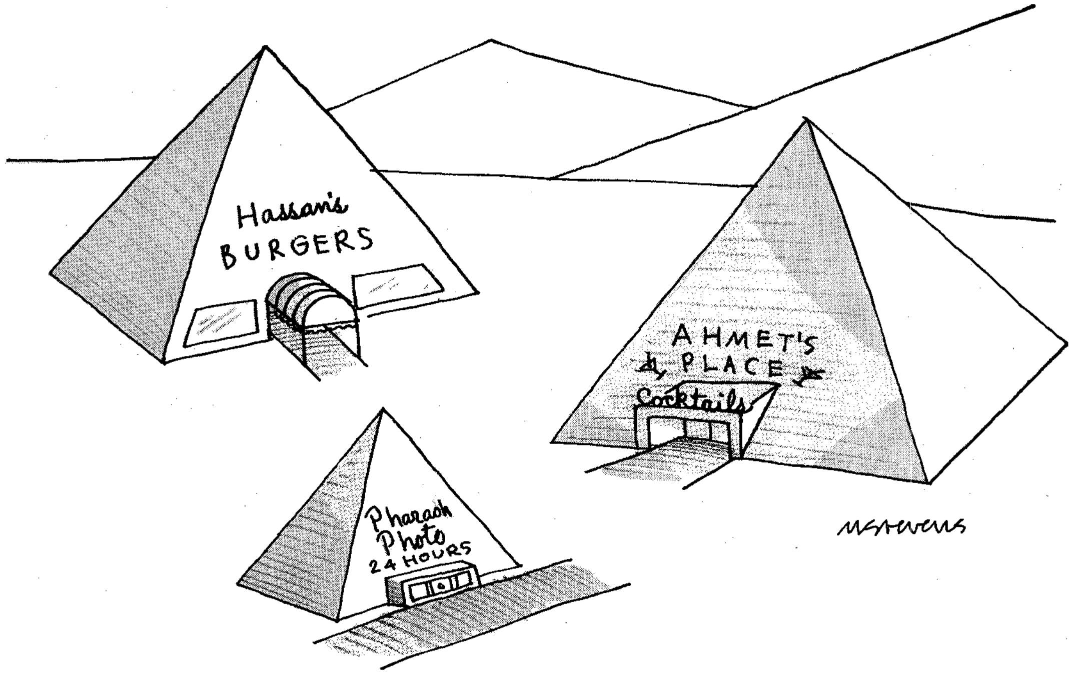
Miss Stein paused and looked around. We followed her gaze to the dusty chandelier overhead, to the partly empty shelves. "You know, I really do look at this all philosophically," she said. "My employment history has been rather dull. I've held only two jobs in my entire life. I started out working in the biggest store in the world—Macy's—when I was sixteen, and now I'm going to finish working in the smallest store in the world. That's how I see it. No regrets."

Dune Shacks

HAZEL HAWTHORNE WERNER is the name that comes up most often when people in Provincetown talk about the dune shacks—more often than Eugene O'Neill, more often than Harry Kemp (Poet of the Dunes), more often than Norman Mailer. Mrs. Werner is eighty-seven, and lives in what she calls a supershack—a former two-car garage in a wooded, almost rural pocket of Provincetown. She doesn't get out to her other shacks much anymore—she has two, Euphoria and Thalassa—and if you ask her how she came to own them she says, "Well, I don't know whether I own them or not." This is a reflection not on Mrs. Werner's memory (she says it does let her down sometimes) but on a confused and controversial state of affairs between the shack owners and the Cape Cod National Seashore, which since 1961 has owned the sand the shacks are sitting on. "The Seashore—that's Seashore with a capital 'S'—wants to dump the shacks, to destroy them," Mrs. Werner says. "They say they're 'undistinguished' structures—and they are." This summer, however, the Massachusetts Historical Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the shacks be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and if they are listed it will save them from destruction by the Seashore, if not from the sea itself.

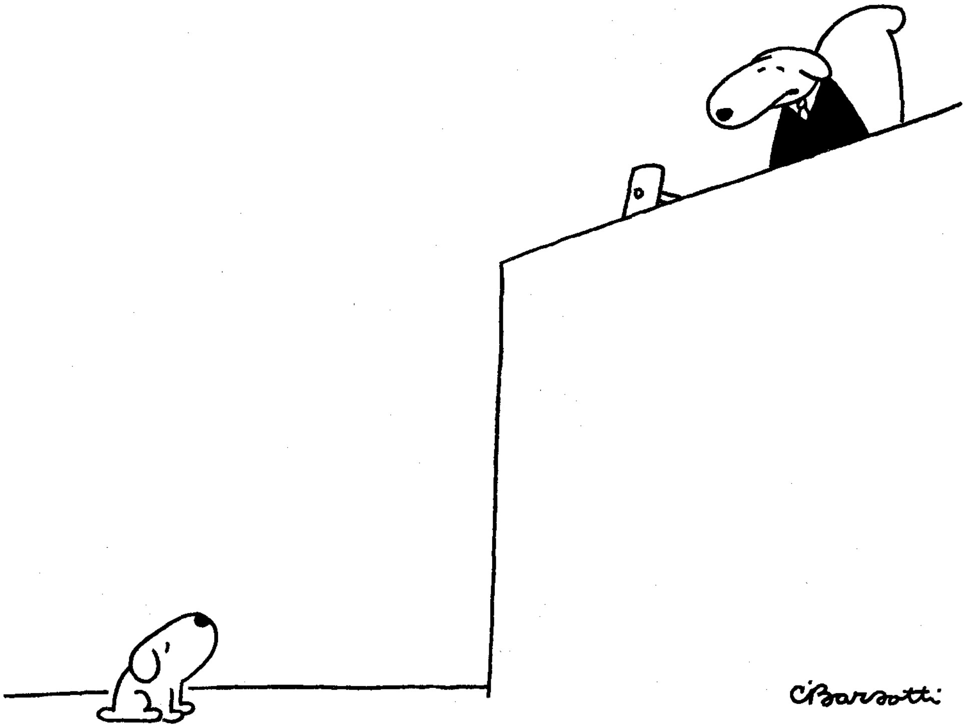
Mrs. Werner first came to the dunes in the early twenties. She remembers that it was hot in New York that summer, and that her husband was at a marine school in England, learning to sail. "I stayed in New York and worked," she told us not long ago. "I hated the heat in the streets and in the tiny room I had. I had a vision of a place by the ocean, where you could take a blanket and sleep on the beach and there was nobody around—maybe a small cottage." When her husband got back, she told him she'd had this vision, and they set out walking along Cape Cod Bay in search of her cottage. They got all the way to Snail Road, the road leading into the dunes in Provincetown. "I turned my head, and there was Agnes Boulton with a suitcase," Mrs. Werner went on. Agnes Boulton was Eugene O'Neill's wife. " 'Hazel, I thought you were in New York,' she said. So I said, 'I had a vision,' and I told her about the cottage. 'Go to the Coast Guard station and find Mr. Mayo, the skipper,' Agnes said—they called him the skipper—'and tell him you want to rent the little shack we had. Gene's father died. I'm going in to town to join him.' She meant New London, I suppose. Gene left the Cape for good a few years after that. He never came back."

For years, Hazel Werner and her children (she had five) spent the summer in one shack or another. Some of the shacks, including O'Neill's, have long since fallen into the water. "I bought Thalassa from a Coast Guard man in town. I have the papers," Mrs. Werner said, gesturing toward a desk against one wall of her supershack. Kitchen appliances were lined up against one adjacent wall, and a bed with a wicker frame took up another wall. Chairs were ranged in front of the remaining one. Mrs. Werner, in a black dress with a black scarf at her throat, was in a wheelchair. "Euphoria I bought from a woman in Boston before the Second World War," she added. "Cora was her name. She had a sweetheart in the Coast Guard. I used to go up on her steps and sit, and one day I thought, Instead of just sitting



The Lesser Pyramids

on the steps I'll write to Cora and buy the place. She was sick to dying of it. A man was haunting her on the beach. I got it for two hundred dollars. There were barrels inside full of stones and shells—souvenirs of her Coast Guard sweetheart. She had me send them to her in Boston."



"As unbelievable as it may seem to you today, this court was once a puppy, too."

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There are eighteen shacks on the dunes right now, only one of which is fully deeded. The Seashore does not recognize squatters' rights, and most of the shack owners (a few are still in litigation) eventually came to terms with the Seashore, signing leases for twenty-five years or life. When the leases are up, the Seashore intends to return the shore to its natural state. A few years ago, because it was getting increasingly difficult for Mrs. Werner to maintain her shacks, some friends who had rented from her in the past founded the Peaked Hill Trust. A nonprofit organization, the trust maintains Euphoria, Thalassa, and one other shack, belonging to Boris Margo, an eighty-six-year-old artist, and it hopes to persuade the Seashore that managing and maintaining the shacks is preferable to tearing them down. (The trust is named for the Peaked Hill Bars, which are sandbars off the coast—underwater dunes, in effect. The first shacks were built by the Massachusetts Humane Society—early coast guards—as shelters for sailors who were shipwrecked on the Peaked Hill Bars.)

Mrs. Werner had some mementos of the shacks at hand: a windowpane from Thalassa which was so scoured by sand during a nor'easter in March of '84 that it looks like frosted glass; a typewritten note from her nephew Tom ("Seen from Thalassa, the world around is like nothing you have seen before—its chaos now in perfect order"); a Polaroid of a pump outside Thalassa; and a map that she used to give people who were going out to Euphoria for the first time. The map showed the horizon as a straight line intersected in a few places by parabolas (the dunes), and a childlike sun, moon, and star were lined up in the sky. To the left were Euphoria and Race Point, the Highlands and Truro to the right.

The day before, we'd taken a walk on the dunes in search of the shacks, and we told Mrs. Werner what we'd seen. We entered the dunes from a fire road off Route 6, across from Snail Road. The first shack we saw, off to the right, after about a half-mile trek, was not a shack at all but a substantial brown house, with what looked like laundry flapping on a line. Then, straight ahead, we saw a flat-topped shack of weathered gray shingles, and climbed up toward it. It had a pump behind it, and an outhouse and a birdhouse, and a collection of rose hips drying in the sun. "That's Boris's shack," Mrs. Werner told us. "That one was nearest to O'Neill's." We didn't peek in the windows or knock or holler, since it was obvious that whoever came out here wasn't expecting company. We turned around and, from behind Boris's shack, saw what we guessed was Euphoria and several other shacks, fragile and inconspicuous among the dunes—certainly no more "unnatural" a sight than the mushrooms sprouting from the sand among the beach grass, scrub oaks, scrub pines, and cranberries.

After our conversation with Mrs. Werner, we returned to the dunes, and, beyond some ruins that she had marked on the map—ruins of an old Coast Guard station—we found Thalassa. We knew Thalassa from its pump, which had a big wooden tub under it that Mrs. Werner said her workman used to wash his feet in. And we knew why it was called Thalassa from the view when we got to the top of the dune it's built on. *Thalassa* is Greek for "sea."

Three Nurses

FOR the Gimmick-O-Rama festival, a retrospective of horror movies of the fifties and sixties, Bruce Goldstein, the program director and P.R. man at Film Forum 2, made elaborate and, as it turned out, successful plans to install Percepto!, an electrical vibrating device, beneath the theatre seats, so that audiences watching "The Tingler," William Castle's 1959 chiller, could have the same tactile experience that the film's original viewers had. But Mr. Goldstein didn't stop there. For such classics as Castle's "Mr. Sardonicus" and "House on Haunted Hill," and Hy Averback's "Chamber of Horrors," he installed the Coward's Corner, the Fear Flasher, the Horror Horn, and Emergo ("more startling than 3-D"). And so, given Mr. Goldstein's thoroughness, we were more than a little disappointed when someone at the Film Forum told us that the registered nurse hired to be on duty during all the screenings of "Macabre," which Mr. Goldstein maintains is Castle's "most terrifying film—a very real hazard to one's health," was not a nurse at all but

"We're still debating."

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Karen Pinkus, a scholar of sixteenth-century Italian literature and history. We called her and asked why she had been chosen for the assignment. "I don't know," she said. "I'm never even sick."

On the afternoon before the film opened, we also called Mr. Goldstein. He sounded somewhat cavalier when we pressed him about Ms. Pinkus's credentials. "O.K., you got me," he said. "But I want you to know that I've called a nurses' registry, and tonight a real one will be there, too. Count on it."

We decided that we could count on nothing, so we asked Shelagh Doyle, a friend of ours who is a staff nurse in the Medical Special Care Unit of Mount Sinai Hospital, to accompany us to "Macabre." Nurse Doyle is tall, wears glasses, has curly red hair, and knows what words like "thyroxine" mean.

As we entered the theatre, we met Karen Pinkus, who was wearing a nurse's uniform that didn't look quite authentic and was saying things like "Please, ladies and gentlemen, know your own limitations. If you don't think you can handle it, get out while you still have the chance." And there was Migdalia Richardson, who, Mr. Goldstein told us sotto voce, was from the Avalon Nurses Registry. She was standing by the entrance, looking stalwart and medical: stethoscope; unglamorous white shoes; and an expression that said "Don't even try to imagine what I've seen in the last twenty years." Nurse Doyle said of Migdalia Richardson, "*She* is a nurse."

We took a seat, right next to Nurse Doyle, near the front. The lights went out. The audience grew silent. Here it's probably a good idea to explain a little about "Macabre." A note in the Film Forum 2 schedule reads, "William Castle made his horror film-directing debut with this bleak and unsettling chiller about a small-town doctor whose daughter has been maliciously buried alive!" That will give you the gist. We heard a narrator's voice explaining the gruesome nature of the film and saying that the plot "moves cadaverously along." Soon we noticed that something strange was happening to Nurse Doyle. Instead of using her medical expertise to assess the behavior of Nurse Richardson and Ms. Pinkus—well, O.K., *Nurse* Pinkus—she was using it to question the plausibility of some of the behavior in the film. For example, when Doctor Barrett, the villain, got shot several times, Nurse Doyle said, "Look at this! The man has been shot four times, in what look like the spleen, the liver, and the bowel. There's no way he could hang around the way he's doing and deliver the kind of long-winded speech he's been delivering. He should be dead by now." And when the ailing Jode Wetherby, wealthy landowner and grandfather of the prematurely buried girl, started to fill in his daughter's grave, Nurse Doyle said, "The man is suffering from angina pectoris and he's burying someone? Everyone knows you're not supposed to shovel if you've got angina."

After the lights came up (it turned out that no one was buried alive after all; the Doctor had feigned his daughter's burial to induce another heart attack in Jode Wetherby, his father-in-law, and thereby inherit something like a million dollars), Nurse Richardson and Nurse Pinkus patrolled the aisles, looking for casualties. Nurse Doyle said, "I think that, given the nature of this event, the girls did a good job keeping everyone from ripping up the seats."

Out in the lobby, we asked Nurse Richardson how things had gone. "As people were leaving the theatre, I asked if anyone needed assistance," she said. "Someone said he needed to be treated for acute boredom."

We heard Nurse Pinkus tell a young woman who was waiting in line for the next show and who had said she wasn't feeling well, "You're going to 'Polyester'—you have nothing to worry about."

Mr. Goldstein stood in the center of the crowd, looked over at the three nurses, who were now talking together in front of the ticket window, and said, "Didn't I do it again? Didn't I pull another one off? Just wait till you see what I do for the Swedish Silent Film Festival."

FATHER MUST

THE question he asked me didn't start with "Father" or anything like that—I'm not his father. It wasn't the words in his question that made me think of the question I'd once asked my father.

The kid's a good kid. He's full of good questions. And while it's true that I haven't let him call me anything, that doesn't stop us from talking.

I did, different times, consider all the names he might call me, like Father or Papa or Daddy, but none ever seemed right. I could have let him call me by the name his mother and others do, but since I really don't care for it, that would miss the whole point.

I JUST once, early on, asked about the father, and she said it had been only one night; then, smiling and pretty, she said it gets dark at night. She said it takes more time than she took to know how a person really looks, so it was a very good thing that the kid looked like her.

When I'm with the kid and someone says he must look like his mother, I just say, "O.K." I don't say, "He's not only her." I don't say, "She's the one who had him, and now, mostly, I have him." I don't say, "She says that even though I don't let him call me anything she thinks that he likes me."

IT'S a nice place, this place; in the day, it has very good light. It's the same place that it was when she first brought me here—same full cupboards, same clean table. I did paint the ceilings, but everything else is the same, except for a few things now that are mine and more stuff that's the kid's.

By the way, I do like him, and it's not just because he's not my own age. When we go out for a walk—well, at first he was two in that red-and-blue stroller—I always ask him about something, because after he answers, and it's always a good answer, I like to ask anyway, "Now, are you sure?" I do it just to see that firm way he nods yes, and when I nod back, that dreamy look he gets because he likes being sure.

BILLY BLAIR's my own age. He was my best friend in grade six, but now I don't see him often. The last time I did, I asked, "Hey, Billy boy, does your mother still sing?" He said his mother never sang, and that's a bad answer, so I said, "But she did. When she was folding the wash, she would sing." And then, you know, he said something, and I didn't say back to him how maybe I was a drunk now but that I was just a plain pure boy in grade six when his mother sang.

Should I find a good doctor, or go to the meetings, meet people? I'd rather—really, I'd like to—go see Mrs. Blair. She's not my own age, so the question would work fine, and she'd even call me Jacksie, my name to people from then.

What if I was the only boy who ever noticed her singing? What I mean is not just the only boy but only man. Someone should tell her. She really could sing.

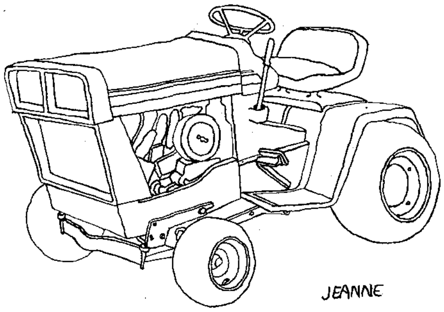
OF course, I'm not going to see Mrs. Blair. From the Blairs' house you can see my old house—diagonally across the street, on the next block, the house without trees. Well, there might be trees there now; it's been twenty years. My father wouldn't plant trees around the house. He said trees around a house get big by making the house small.

Did my mother like trees?

I'm not saying my father was wrong; I know what he meant, and what that meant, but it would have been nice to have trees.

AM I thinking of my father because of Billy Blair's answer, or because of the kid's question, or because today's Sunday? Just because the sun's not up yet doesn't mean it isn't Sunday. I'm here in the kitchen, drinking black coffee.

In Japan, there are now big factories that operate all night without lights—robots don't need lights. These factories of robots are dark in the dark; all black in black. You can hear these factories long before you can see them; you can be almost next to them and still not see them; you might have to touch them to see them.



I DON'T know why, but on Sunday mornings my father never got drunk. It wasn't because the liquor store wasn't open—he'd buy his week's supply on Saturdays. And it wasn't because he was religious. He used to say, "Don't tell anybody, but I've got some different angles on the cross." Maybe that's part of an old joke, I don't know. My father also used to say something else like that, but he'd recite it like poetry: There's only one God/ God sees the little sparrow fall/ There's only one God/ He's for sparrows.

I never went to Sunday school, because my father, who wore suits and ties, didn't want to see me wearing suits and ties.

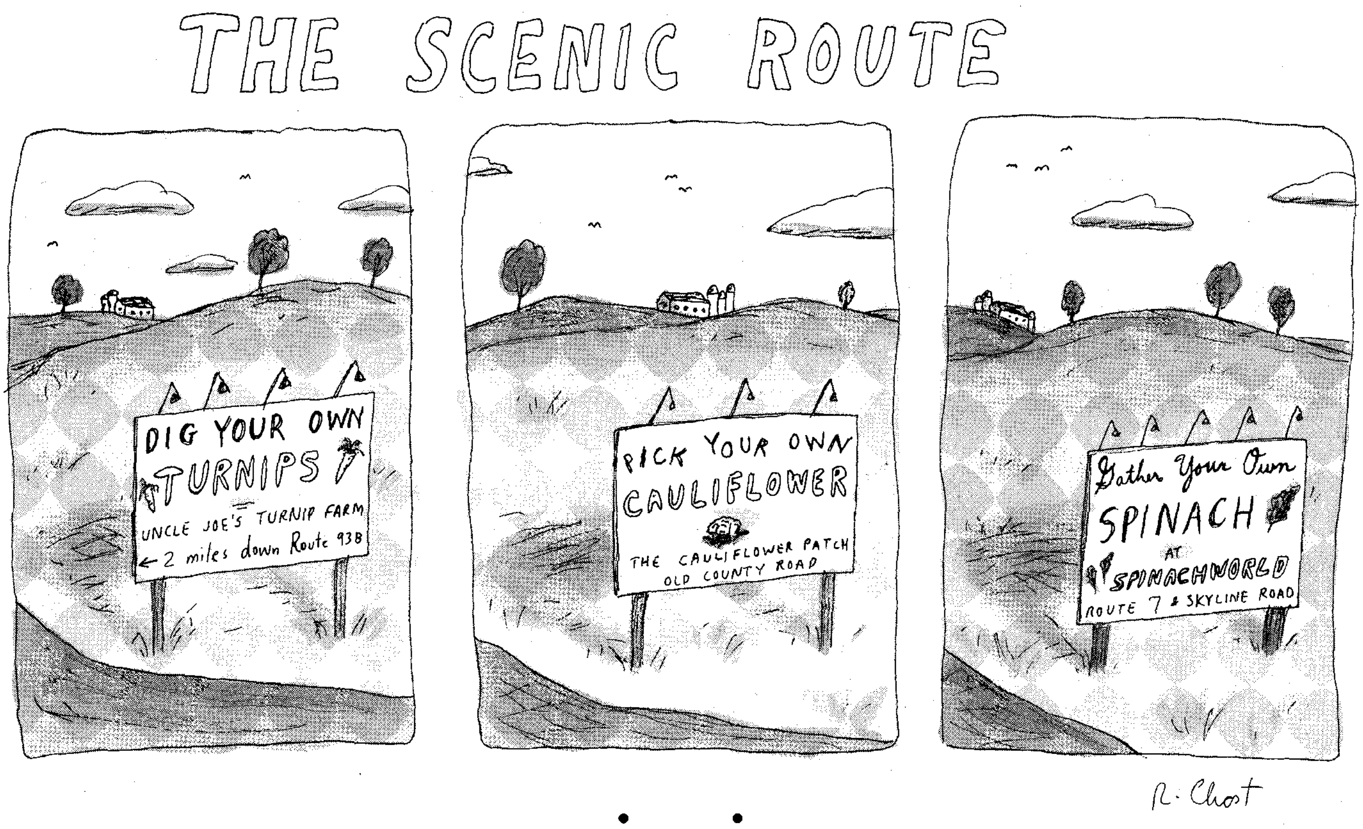
THE sky, except for a few stars, is still dark. The moon has gone down without waiting for the sun to come up.

I was only thirteen when my mother died in the spring. I still think that spring is a strange time for someone to die. It was about noon when the people came back to the house from the funeral. My father came charging through a crowd of them shouting, "Take off that tie! Go to your room and change out of that suit!" That day wasn't a Sunday, but it was like a Sunday. I don't care what everyone thought, he hadn't been drinking that morning; he wasn't drunk, he was wild.

My father didn't last long—four and a half years isn't long. I wore a suit and tie at his funeral and I thought, and people said, that I looked pretty good.

THEY let me stay in my house while I finished grade twelve. I just wasn't supposed to be alone, although it turned out that a lot of the time I was. When anyone was staying in the house with me, I would sleep in my room, but when nobody was I'd move out into the den and sleep on the rug between lots of blankets.

A housekeeper would come in from ten until two five days a week, so I'd come home for lunch and when I'd



finished eating she'd pour herself and me fresh coffee. I'd never liked coffee before. Because she hadn't known my parents, we talked about just anything while she mostly kept moving around the kitchen. When the housekeeper did sit, it was in my mother's chair. The housekeeper didn't know whose chair it had been, and I didn't mention it.

I was O.K. for money and had accounts at some places. When I had to go to a doctor or dentist or something, I'd take a taxi. The first snowy day that winter, I got a driver who had just moved from China and had never seen snow before. I remember now that he kept saying, "So white. So beautiful," over and over. Although he didn't speak English very well, he had a way of making the word "white" sound white and the word "beautiful" sound beautiful.

On Saturdays, the housekeeper would come for just two hours in the morning, so weekends were pretty quiet. Sundays were really quiet.

After the house was sold for me, I never went back there.

I'D been thinking again lately if I should let the kid call me something. If it doesn't work out between his mother and me, and I leave, he should be able to call me by a name if he sees me somewhere. I'd have no reason not to let him, and, who knows, sometime he might want to introduce me to someone.

If he called me by the name I'm called now, I still wouldn't like it, and especially not from him, because the name was my father's, so I'd been thinking why not Jacksie or Jacks. Until yesterday, I'd pretty much settled on Jacks, which was what people called me when I lived alone in the house.

If I let him just once call me something, I was thinking, then it would be up to him—he's almost seven—whether or not to call me that from then on. But then I thought should I let him start calling me something right away or wait to see how things work out with his mother and me?

IT might not seem easy to breathe any love into a name like Father. It's a stiff word—it's not soft, like, say, Papa—but sometimes you have to breathe love into names you don't choose.

Yesterday, Saturday, in the afternoon, the kid had a question he came in the house to ask me, and the question didn't start with "Father" or anything like that—he knows I'm not his father—and there was nothing like "must" in his question.

As the sun comes up, this kitchen will get brighter; the ceiling, the table, the cupboards are white.

The kid's question was just one about a picture on the box the Wiffle ball came in, which shows the curve and the slider, but because he was looking lower than my eyes, at the bottle I'd just opened, it made me think of the question I'd once asked my father, who I called Father.

It's only now that I'm thinking that my father might have heard my question before, not from being asked but by asking, and the answer he might have been given could have been the same one he, a glass at his lips, gave me.

When the kid asked me his question yesterday about the curve and the slider, what he wanted was for me to come outside and catch the ball for him, and throw it to him. He wanted to watch his own throw and see mine, and then talk it over, so he could be sure.

So I went outside with him and the Wiffle ball, but first I used the same answer I'd been given to a different question. Now the kid can call me that or not that, whatever he likes; he doesn't have to worry. And I know that he heard me—he looked up at my eyes when I said, "Father must."

—Rick Rofihe

ALABASTER

1
The original word
Eddied and forked, to mean (a) the soft stone
In use today—flamboyant, vaguely lewd
Honey-pink volumes flounced with lard
Like Parma ham, like the blown-up
Varnished nipple of a Titian nude.

Then (b) the ancient one—
A kind of Pharaonate of Lime,
Cosmetic white, or unbleached-linen white
Through which waves cresting purer white
Make a river seem to stand upright
When the jar fills with sun.

You could say that vagabond gypsum and sacerdotal
Calcite embody the two
Mainstreams of Western thought—Aristotle
And Plato, gristle and dream;
Also that on those mornings they're shone through
Both are supreme.

2
Thanks to it, for centuries a glow
Not quite of this world lit
Sanctum, princeling, and folio.
Always too late
We saw the stricken cow, the rabble below
With catapult and crossbow.

Now came the age of glass.
Each room boasted a device whereby
Odd behavior, even miles away,
Could be perceived. (Uh-oh.
From then on it was curtains, both for us
And for the window.)

Visible meanwhile, we had to clean
Our act up. Probity, good sense?
Zero to 1 on the Mohs scale, yet, we'd learn,
Indistinguishable on a wide screen
From gleaming marble, rosy with concern:
The stuff of Presidents.

3
And if a tissue-thin
Section of self lay on a lighted slide,
And a voice breathed in your ear,
"Yes, ah yes. That red-oxide
Stain is where your iron, Lady Hera,
Entered him.

And in this corner, boldly intricate
As agate, zigzagging
Bays and salients—plans of a fortress?—date
From his twentieth spring,
When we had set the dials at *First Love.*
Up here's the opalescent fossil of—"

Dream on. Dodo and roc
Did without your pious autopsies.
Nor will the self resist,
Broken on terror like a rack,
When waves of nightmare heat decrystallize
Her lucid molecules to chalk.

4
Landscapes about to disappear
Absorb what life
They can. Tamped rainbows tallied
The aeons of one banded cliff.
Time pressing hawk and asp and onager
Each to its hieroglyph,

Gods fled to high ground. The dam totally
Quashed—like a warlord—
The future of that past. Henceforward
As text and text alone would the sacred valley
Invite construction. Shall we
Go to the blackboard?

October Flood Sun Set
[The] *Water Table Rising Presences*
[Balance the] *Mirror* [upon] *Granite Knees*
[A] *Scorpion* [made of] *Gems* [in it]
—The so-called "zodiac" cartouche of Sūt,
Found (1904) by Côme de Guise.

5
In spring but also now in fall
Earth's tilt allows
Early sun to flow straight through the house,
So catching a catchall
Thrift-shop table in the upstairs hall
That its translucent inset glows,

Mild, otherworldly, from the underside.
As once in love or infancy
Yesterday's cargo—pinecone, junk mail, key—
Floats on a milky tide,
Grime-swirled, with blood-pink glimmerings. For me
The time I dread

Is coming, thinks the table. Yet despite
All that, these fine, late days,
Long minutes after dawn, whatever weighs
Upon me light
Bears up, as to recall it does
From the dry channel of a starless night.

—JAMES MERRILL

EVERYONE IS WEARING A HAT

WHEN my husband comes to bed, I am already there, reading a popular magazine. He climbs in heavily beside me, jouncing the mattress, and says, "Get the light, will you, hon?" Even when we are alone together, my husband talks too loud.

"Why do you do that?"

"What?"

"Shout. I'm right here next to you."

He pulls himself up on one elbow and smiles at me. "Then why is the light still on?"

I look back at the magazine. "In just one minute. One more paragraph, O.K.?"

He doesn't say anything. Instead, he rocks his head on his pillow, folds his hands over his stomach, and makes his face a cartoon of patience. My husband is a large man—dark, meaty, barrel-chested, with the blue sheen of his beard always showing at his jaw, a thatch of black hair that stands up from his forehead. Even when he is dressed and serious, he looks exaggerated, like a caricature of a man, like the brute in a children's story, and this pains me. When we were younger, he had a lovely habit, at crosswalks and in open doorways, of resting one hand just beneath my shoulder blades with the gentle pressure of a dance. I'd glance furtively at him, believing his spirit was as lithe and arresting and keen as the weight of his hand, and I'd mourn the cruel irony of his broad looks. Now he crosses his ankles and sighs as he smooths the bedcover over his chest.

"I get you, I get you," I say, reaching behind me to turn out the light.

We lie there in the dark, tossing lightly to find our shapes in the mattress. Then he says, quieter now, "What was that all about?"

I sit up in bed again. Lately I find myself giving up my own comfort for the chance to tell my husband something new. "It was an article about dreams and men and women," I tell him. "It said women laugh more in their dreams than men do." I pause a moment to allow him to make up his mind. Then I say, "Now, what is that supposed to mean?"

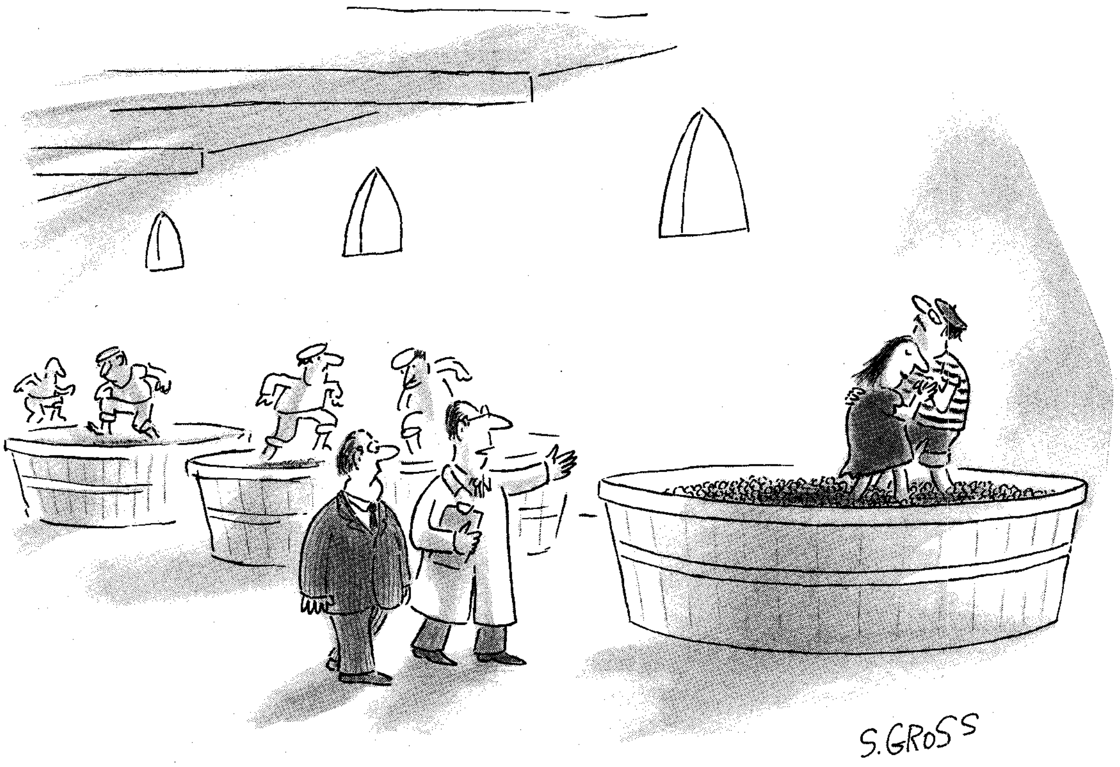
I'm suddenly interested again in what things mean. For a long time, I wasn't. I did take our son, Nathaniel—Natty—to museums and river caverns, and one year to see a mossy replica of the dank cabin, the crude bed and furnishings, that marked the beginning of Abraham Lincoln's stingy, melancholy life. But then I was more concerned with what all those things meant to Natty—a thin, excitable, openmouthed sort of boy, with pale-blond hair, pale skin, almost translucent. Outside Lincoln's timber doorway or packed into a tour shuffling dimly through Steamboat Cave, in the presence of any huge mystery, Natty opened one eye wider than the other and stiffened with expectation. Seeing him like that, I always felt compelled to smooth his hair or his shoulders, and I forgot myself.

Nine months ago, when he was eight, Natty was crossing Hinkson Avenue when he was killed by a man driving a burgundy late-model pickup truck with a license plate that began EXK or JXK or J8E. Witnesses gave the police these details, and so that is what the police gave us. They have not found the truck or the man.

Just before the funeral, I touched Natty's hand, fingering a familiar crescent-shaped nick on his thumb, where he had closed a door on it. Yearning filled my chest like a bright light. I've met my loss, I thought. Kneeling beside him, I closed my eyes and pressed his hand to my face. I knelt that way until my husband squeezed my shoulder. "Natty's gone," he said, drawing Natty's hand away from me. I stared up at him. His fingers dug sharply into the flesh of my shoulder. His face was strangely, unaccountably firm.

"What is it?" I asked him.

He drew me solidly to my feet. There was no question in his touch, not a doubt. He led me through a doorway and into a small anteroom hushed with long shadows. We stood in front of a draped window. Outside it was early evening. Through the window I saw a darkening path lined with purple phlox, blooms



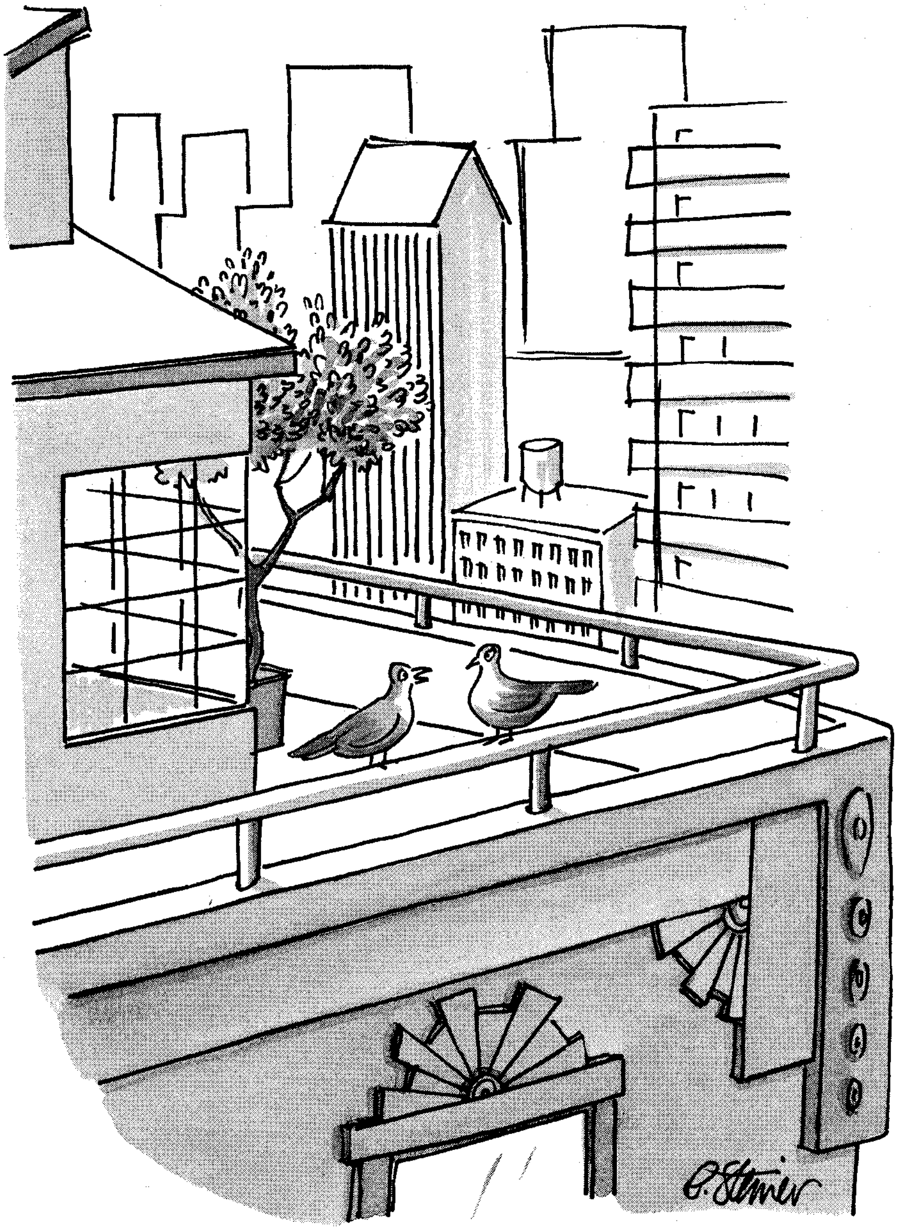
"We're hoping for a really smooth wine here."

as heavy and round as a child's head. We stood quietly a moment, my husband's hand still on my shoulder. "Natty's gone now," he said again.

I knew that. I knew Natty was gone, but with his hand pressed to my cheek, his body still held a power—one final intimacy. That is what I had wanted to mourn—the loss of his touch, his weight, the small light bones that had grown and passed through my own body. Once, as a girl, under the flowered daybed in our formal parlor, I'd watched in horror as my calico cat devoured her own kitten—a tiny, crooked, limp thing, born dead. At that window, our son's body a room away, I understood the impossible estrangement I'd witnessed then. Slowly, I reached up to take my husband's hand from my shoulder, and after I'd held it a moment I squeezed, hard, until I was certain I'd hurt him. Then I walked out into the funeral garden.

I sat alone on a small bench I'd seen through the window. The bouquets of phlox hung heavy on their slender stalks. Scattered among them, orange daylilies had already closed for evening. A bed of yellow and pink pansies shimmered at the bank of a round reflecting pool. The path I'd seen was decorative. It led back to a stockade fence grown over with ivy and stopped. This was a formal garden. Someone had planned it for effect—to soothe me, to simplify my grief in a sentimental setting of lush and redolent growth, with the murmur of water, that small winding path. Even I was part of the design. I stood up quickly. I was the person for whom the bench had been planned.

That moment, my standing alone in the darkened garden, stricken with loss and sudden self-consciousness, is how Natty's death continues to happen to me. Life, no longer ordinary, becomes profligate—a reckless boil of mute, mystifying details. This morning, before dawn, a tree moved in the wind outside, its branches rattling the window like a handful of marbles. I bolted out of sleep and sat rigid, drawing the sheet around me, listening in the dark. Last week, in an elevator, rocketing to the twenty-sixth floor and my dentist's office downtown, I stood breathless and blinking, having just realized, like some character in a parable stunned into sensibility, that everyone but me was wearing a hat.



"Penthouse duplex, East Sixties, three bedrooms, two baths, solarium, sauna, two thousand square feet, terrace, bird feeder, two and a half million."

• •

MY husband turns to me now and says, "What did the article say the difference meant?"

I slide back down in bed. "Well, it doesn't," I say. "It makes a sort of feeble attempt to link it to hormones or something—says a dreaming woman suffers giddy bursts of estrogen—but it backs off even from that."

"Huh," my husband says. He is being kind now. I haven't told him enough to impress him. He is punching his pillow. He is thinking of rest. "Didn't Lulu use to laugh in her sleep?"

Lulu was a black cocker spaniel we had for the first six years we were married. She slept constantly, like an old cat, sometimes fifteen, twenty hours a day, and the only way I had to judge her affection was where she chose to nap. In the beginning, she liked the head of our bed, where she'd bury her muzzle under my husband's pillow. Then, for a year or so, she moved to the bottom of my closet, among my shoes. Finally she ended up in Natty's room, wedged in the small space of bare floor between his headboard and the wall. Nothing I ever noticed accounted for these changes, but now when I think of her I think, "Lulu. First she was my husband's dog, then she was mine, and then she was Natty's."

"Lulu *ran* in her sleep," I tell my husband. "She'd pant and move her legs." I paddle my arms to show him.

"Ha," my husband says. "That's right." He turns to look at me as he remembers, and I feel his breath warm on my cheek. "Where was that animal going?"

"Who knows?" We smile then, together, in the dark.

"Well," he says, and draws me against him.

We lie that way awhile, back to front, breathing, listening. The house is warm this evening. Earlier, it rained buckets, a sudden twilight storm that flew against the house in roars, then stopped. It's spring again. One of us should open a window. Thinking about it, I am suddenly not sleepy. I could get up, make a cup of coffee, sit on the back porch, maybe walk in the yard, wait for the moon. I don't know what I want to do. My husband's chest falls, then rises against my back. I am keeping him awake, I know.

"I'm sorry," I say. "I need to make up my mind—sleep or get up."

"I'm fine," he tells me, and presses closer, drawing his knees up behind mine. We could make love, I think, and then realize that is what he has just told me. I am oddly, deeply embarrassed not to have understood that immediately. Though I mean to press lightly against him my response, I move too quickly, in a strange brief spasm. My ankle catches his shin sharply, and then I freeze like a hapless girl, too mortified even to apologize. My throat and eyes fill suddenly with tears, but I lie there still as a stone, watch the digital clock roll slowly, 29 to 30, and wonder at how a sorrow so much larger than this moment can be so neatly contained by it.

My husband is quiet behind me, his breathing shallow and alert. Then he draws the sheet up over our shoulders, tucks a corner under my hair. "I don't think dogs laugh," he says. "Don't they just smile sometimes?"

"You should throw me out of bed," I tell him. "Put your foot between my shoulders and shove."

"Oh," he says. "Well."

I roll over in his arms, see that he is wide awake and watching me, then I roll back. We both settle deeper into the bed, press against each other again.

"There should be a book or something to look these things up in." He yawns. I feel him relax again. "An Encyclopedia of Dog Lore," he says.

"There probably is one. It's probably on someone's coffee table right now—next to the Herbal Guide to Ending Human Misery." I turn to lie on my back, pull my arms up behind my head, then take them down again. "What I would want explained," I say, "about the dogs, I mean, is why they would do one and not the other—just smile, never laugh." I look at him. "Assuming they were capable."

He thinks this over. "Bemused but not amused, huh? Maybe that's it. Decorum. Maybe they always feel like guests." He likes this idea. He draws his pillow under his neck. I see his teeth flash in the dark. "Sure, it's our house," he says, "our sofa. We get to pick the dog food and which TV shows to watch. They don't even know the language. They're like those tour groups of Chinese businessmen you see on the news, standing at a baseball game, holding a hot Polish and a beer. Sure. Laughing would be un*seem*ly, just too cocky, as if they knew what was what."

He is having a good time, even giggling a little, as if we were drunk or young. I listen to him and think, "This isn't what I wanted to talk about." I don't know what it is I do want to talk about.

"Lulu never felt like a guest," I tell him.

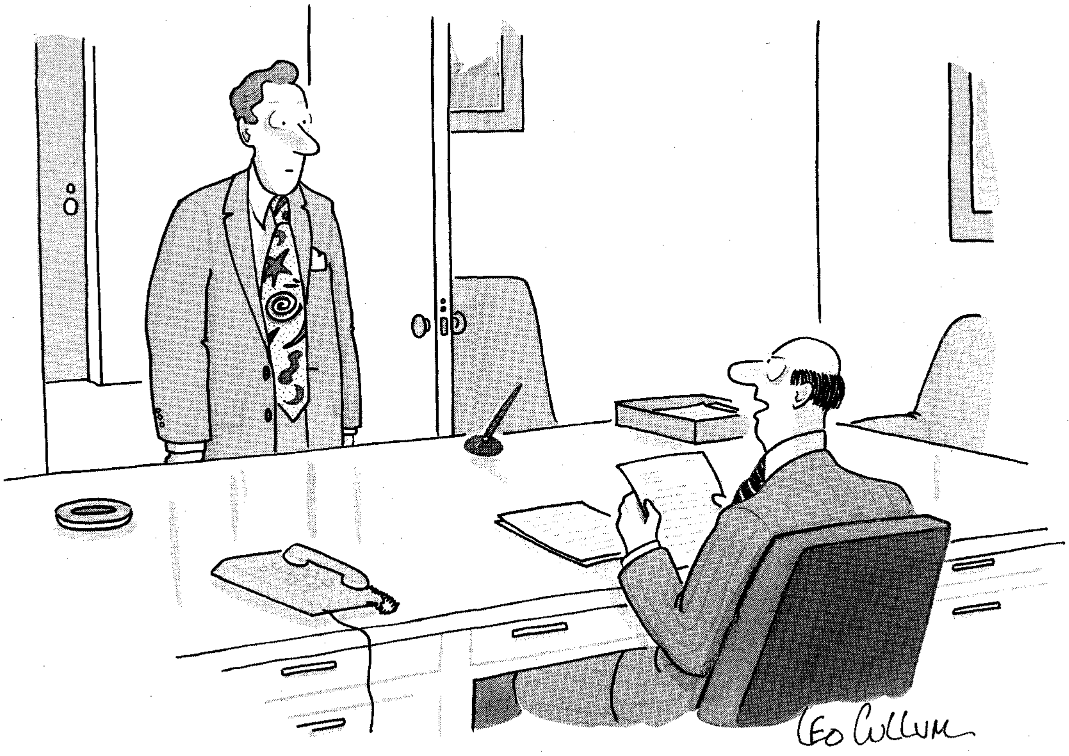
He doesn't say anything.

"She was part of the family."

"Hey," he says. "Hey."

We are both quiet then. The bed is still. The room is still. My skin draws tight with the silence. Outside a car goes by, and I wish I were in it, or that I were a tree, or the ground, absorbing all that rain.

"Come here," he says.



"That tie, Merrick. It's not your friend."

I don't want to now—his voice is too harsh in the quiet room—but I do. "What?"

He gropes, finds my face in the dark, and holds it between his hands for a moment.

"What?" I say again.

He kisses me. For a moment, I lie there and let him, relieved that this is all he wants. Often these days, he seems too large or loud, his hands too heavy, and I don't want him to touch me—or I do, but in a way he doesn't know. A week ago, I rolled away from him when I woke to see him staring at me, cradling one of my palms against his cheek. Later that afternoon, he went out to help a neighbor trim a diseased elm, and from the window I watched him hanging from the thickest branch, swaying lightly in a sling of slender rope as he struggled with the long-handled saw. He leaned back dangerously to set the blade, and when he shook his hair to clear his vision sweat flew off in a ringed mist. I wanted him then, but only then, for that one moment, that one gesture, shaking his head in the sun, defying gravity. I feel him waiting now, so I put my arms around him.

"There," he says. "Now come close and settle in, will you?"

I do what he says, draw close to his side, press my cheek to his large chest. Quickly, he is nearly asleep. His body loosens and uncurls from mine. When I feel his hand open on my shoulder and slip away, I press my cheek harder against his chest. "Why were we talking about that?" I say.

"You were reading about women and men, about the different sounds they make when they're dreaming." He answers me without stirring, his voice low and colorless, as though he were already sleeping, as though he were talking in his own dream. I feel his body weighty and warm next to mine. On the crown of my head, even his breath is warm.

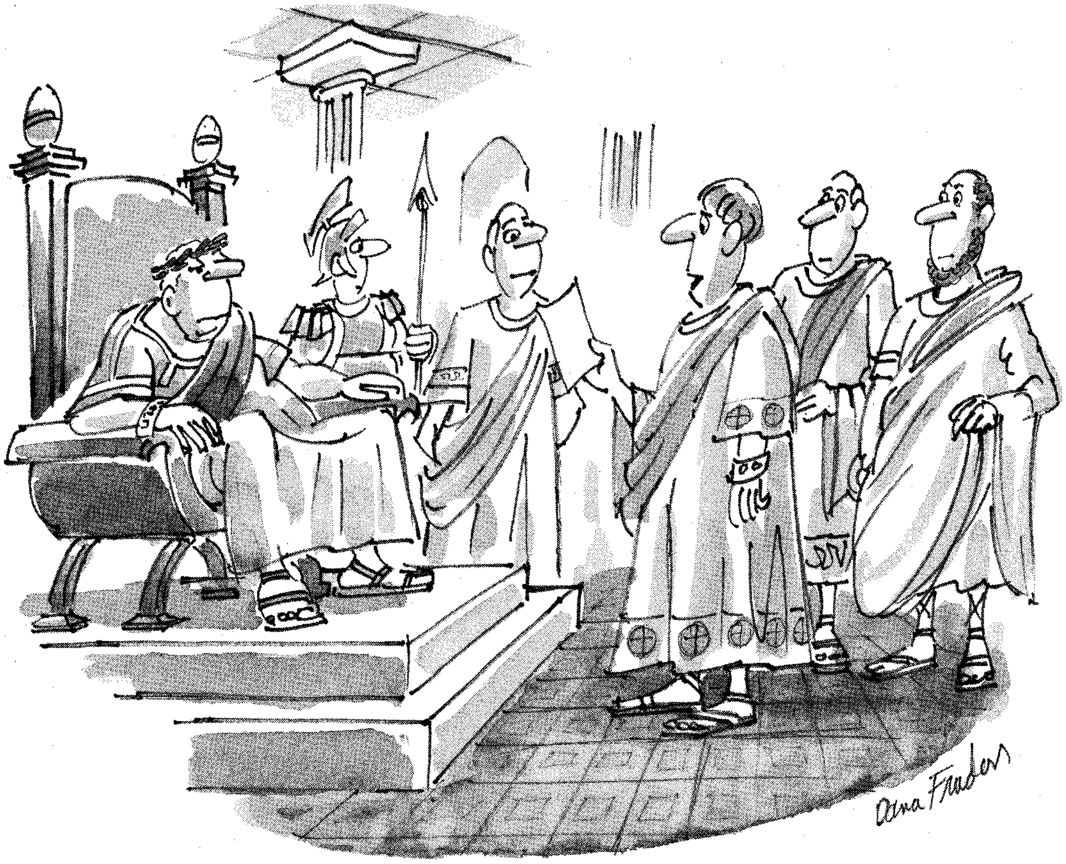
"Oh," I say. I lean back to look at him, see that his eyes are closed, his face is slack, his jaw slightly agape. "The thing is," I say. He opens his eyes, looks at me gravely, but I go on. "I still don't understand what it means. It must mean something or it wouldn't happen."

"Maybe," he says, closing his eyes again, pressing my cheek to his chest with one wide hand. "Maybe it's just a fact."

I lie there a moment. I want to be soothed by what he's said. I understand that facts comfort him, that like the men in that magazine he is different, and difference is all he has to offer. His hand slips away from me. He is sleeping now. Under my cheek, there is the sturdy rhythm of his heart and breath, and as fact that, too, should comfort me, but it does not. Slowly, I slide away from him, to the far side of the bed, where I sit up and watch him, a darker shadow in the dark. His chest shudders once and he sprawls into a deeper sleep, throwing one arm over my thigh, his breath a loud string of rattling snores. His arm is heavy, a wooden dead weight on my thigh. Suddenly I kick it off me, wanting to wake him, to tell him he is wrong—deluded by his own thick body, by the warm wide circle of his arms and the comfort he believes waits for me there. I want to tell him the whole surface of his life is a fraud, that inside even his literal, loutish sleep some terrible provocation throbs.

In the breeze outside, the tree taps the window again and draws me out of bed in the dark. The sheet slides soundlessly to the floor as I stand there, and briefly, in a pale flash, I think of Natty, of my pale child, of his face, still smooth and credulous, as he glanced up to see . . . what? The silver grille of a burgundy truck? A license plate that began EXK or JXK or J8E? There wouldn't have been time for his mind to name it—only the dark roar of mystery, and him there, poised, one eye wider than the other, openmouthed and alone, a moment just shy of the blow that would end all he'd known for certain.

—JANET DESAULNIERS



"It's true, Caesar. Rome is declining, but I expect it to pick up in the next quarter."

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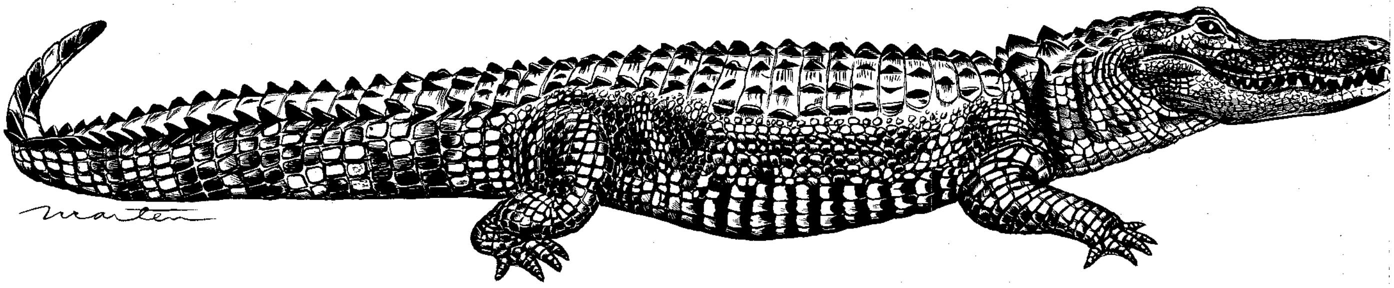
A REPORTER AT LARGE

CROCODILIANS



NOTHING looks more contented than a resting alligator. The mouth falls naturally into a crumpled smile, the eyes half close in a sleepy sort of way, the puckered back looks as harmless as the papier-mâché maps of the Alps that children make in elementary school. The thick toes hug the mud like tree roots. Alligators, because their massive jaws curve upward, appear to be laughing even when they're in repose. They seem caught in a great big private chuckle. And they do have something to be smug about. After all, they've seen the disappearance of the dinosaur and the Neanderthal. They are a hundred times as ancient as human beings.

Crocodilians, birds, and dinosaurs had a common origin, about two hundred and thirty million years ago during the Mesozoic Era, in a group of early reptiles called thecodonts. Today, there are three groups of crocodilians: crocodiles; alligators and caimans; and gharials (lissome, skewer-nosed animals that frequent the Ganges). According to the fossil record, there were once sixty-foot-long aquatic crocodilians, and also crocodilians that hunted on land and had six-inch teeth. In the heyday of huge, miscellaneously talented dinosaurs, the crocodilians not only competed with them but somehow outwitted the forces that killed them off. Today's crocodilians, which have survived with only minor changes since the time of tar pits and thunder lizards, are living relics, and we are fascinated by them partly because of how out of place they look. They're real "Mesozoic leftovers," as George Campbell, the author of "Jaws, Too!," a natural history of crocodilians, calls them. And children are just as wild about crocodilians as they are about dinosaurs, lumping them all together in one big carnival of monsters.

I am reminded of this one bright February morning at the St. Augustine Alligator Farm, where I've come with the zoologist Dr. Kent Vliet and other researchers, all from the University of Florida, in Gainesville, to "bleed alligators," as Kent calls the taking of blood samples. He and his colleague Dr. Louis Guillette, a reproductive physiologist who works with reptiles, are studying the effects of captivity on hormone cycles.

"When you capture an alligator, its stress hormones sometimes go screeching up, and its reproductive hormones can plunge for days," Kent explains. "There are a lot of things we'd like to understand about their hormonal cycles. The basic problem we're concerned with is that alligators, like many animals, reproduce much less successfully in captivity than in the wild. It might be a result of how densely the animals are crowded together. When animals are under stress, reproduction drops. So we've developed a threefold project. The first part is just to look at the effect our taking blood and handling the alligators has on their hormones. The second part is to look at alligators in different population densities and compare the hormone concentrations. The third part is a sort of background check to make sure that alligators in captivity cycle hormonally the way wild alligators do. Throughout the year, we take blood samples monthly, sometimes even biweekly."

Doing this requires regular gator roundups, and they require rounding up about half a dozen people who are eager to grapple with alligators. Although Kent, who is in his thirties, is a heavily built man with large, powerful hands, it would be an ordeal for him to collect alligators every month all by himself. It takes a lot of volunteers to handle a group of alligators, and on this occasion Kent and Lou have six helpers: besides me, there is Debbie, an effervescent graduate student, with a mop of brown curls, who is known locally as "the possum lady," because she works with opossums; Sylvia, a quiet Nicaraguan graduate student, whose subject is the brown caiman; Barry and Jimmy, two outgoing musicians and alligator enthusiasts; and John, a tall, thin graduate student with a lot of field experience, who spends most of the year in Venezuela studying the spectacled caiman and the Orinoco crocodile. I ask John what, exactly, a zoologist does, and, laughing, he answers, "A zoologist is someone who stops along the roadway to pick up dead animals."

Several of us travelled to the alligator farm together by van, along with the equipment, and the rest arrived separately. There was no way to miss the rendezvous site, since it was announced by billboards with paintings of giant alligators, jaws open wide enough to hold a lion tamer and his lion. The St. Augustine Alligator Farm is the world's oldest existing alligator farm. It was started in 1893, by George Reddington and Felix Fire, the conductor and the fireman on a train that ran from St. Augustine to St. Augustine Beach. As the train wove through the swamps, people would see basking alligators and ask the trainmen to stop so they could watch. Fire and Reddington often had to stop anyway, to remove alligators from the tracks, and one day they decided to gather up some of the animals, put them in a bathhouse on the beach, and charge people a quarter for a look. The present owner's father, a haberdasher, bought this farm and another one, in Jacksonville, in 1937, and combined the two herds, to produce a collection of the largest, oldest, and fattest alligators ever. Most of the older gators were caught more than fifty years ago, while the rest were hatched at the farm. In just one pen live a hundred and twenty-eight alligators, whose average age handlers estimate at seventy-five years. Some show white calcium deposits on their tails—scar tissue from fights. A few are missing an eye. It is sometimes hard to tell where one alligator begins and another ends, since for the most part they lie as still as masonry.

"How would you know if one died?" I ask.

"You've got to look for flies around their eyes," Kent says practically.

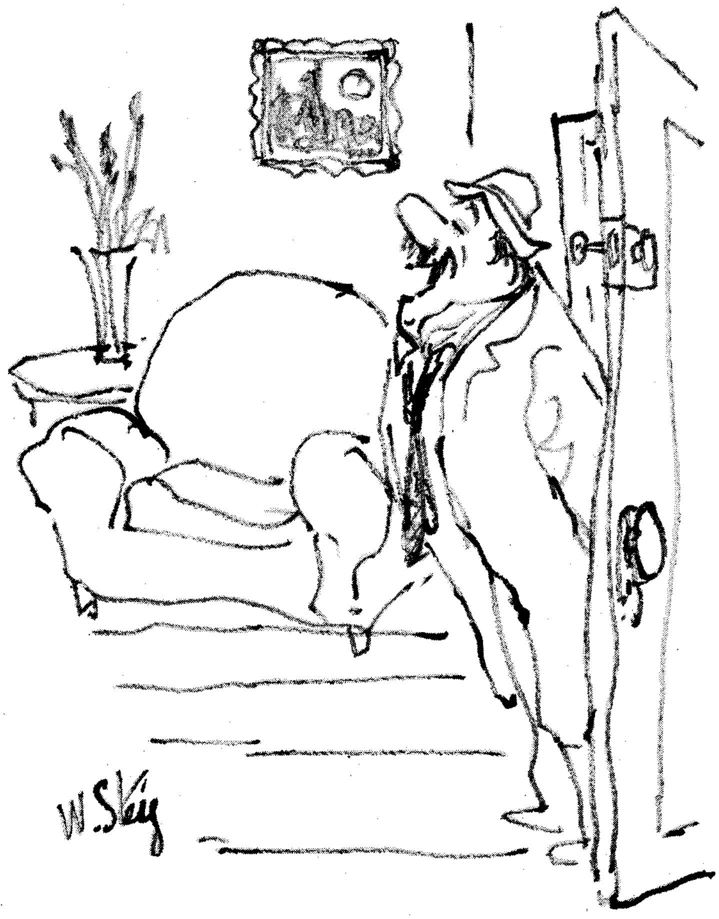
"When they die, do you bury them?"

"Burial's rough. A nine-hundred-pound alligator needs a big hole. We had a big old alligator die here once, and I weighed its head—just its head and neck—at a hundred and fifty pounds."

Though it's a cool day, and feels ten degrees colder in the shade, large crowds meander from one exhibit of crocodilians to the next. Each year, up to a quarter of a million people make this pilgrimage to ogle some of the last of the giant reptiles. Eating popcorn or hot dogs, they gawk at caimans, from Central and South America; a Nile crocodile, from Africa; false gavials, from Indonesia; American alligators; saltwater crocodiles, from Sri Lanka; American crocodiles; highly endangered Chinese alligators; Morelet's crocodiles, from Central America; Cuban crocodiles; African dwarf crocodiles; and Siamese crocodiles. Regular shows in a small amphitheatre reveal the basics of "alligator wrestling." But the most popular place is a shallow, swampy lake containing about a hundred and sixty adult alligators, most of which lurk just out of sight below the chilly water—a habit that makes them even more frightening to many people, because they seem to dwell in their subaqueous world as mysteriously as they do in our dreams. Raised, fenced wooden walkways lead out over the swimming animals. Children race down these walkways and leap onto the rails, in a frenzy to see the huge, potbellied alligators (they have grown obese from never having to hunt prey), while parents scream and move cautiously down the center. One woman looks as if she were walking the plank. Another, bold with curiosity, leans right over the rail and tries to look underneath the walkway.

The first time I saw Kent was in a National Geographic film, "Realm of the Alligator": armed with only a five-foot cypress cudgel, he lay up to his neck in this same lake full of alligators. He was floating among them and observing them on their own terms, at eye level, in the hope of deciphering their body language and visual cues. Scanning the water for signs of submerged gators, he occasionally pushed away animals that got too close. It didn't surprise me that a zoologist might wish to enter the alligator's world as fully as possible. Not much is known about alligators. They don't train well, and they're unwieldy and rowdy to work with in laboratories, so the best way to study them is out-of-doors. But watching that film made me realize how passive, otherworldly, and deeply maternal alligators could be. They are tender mothers, and languorous, sensual swains.

Alligator courtship rituals are lengthy and oddly delicate. They begin with a female's affectionate pestering. She swims up to a male and rubs him gently along the face, nuzzles his neck a little, nudges him with her solid black shoulders, and alternately caresses and softly pushes his head. Then she might bump him lightly, or climb onto his back and slide right over his head with her full weight. Sometimes she actually rides the male around the lake. All this is to get his mind off unromantic things, like squabbling with other males or staking out a territory. Once he gets the message, he enters into the spirit of things. There is much stroking of heads, because so many touch receptors are grouped there, especially along the side of the head. If you think about it, this makes sense for aquatic animals. Alligators are creatures of the water's edge, with dual citizenship in the wet and dry worlds. Though not technically amphibians, they do live in the double lights of water and sky, and they are masters of the narrow realm where the two worlds collide. They touch to orient themselves to one another, to the water, to the air. Sometimes they blow bubbles at each other, and cough gently. After a long period of weighty caressing, the male puts his head over the female's neck or head, presses her down, lifts his front leg and hind leg on one side, and slides up onto her. Mating involves maneuvering their cloacas together; these vents lie under the base of the tail, and it's hard to get them in position. The male lies on top of the female and embraces her with his forelimbs; then he angles his head across her neck and slides off her until he's stretched full length with his front along her



"Ready or not, here I come!"

side. He braces himself against her back or pelvis with a hind leg, searches with his tail, and finally gets the tip of it underneath the female. Then all he has to do is pull his tail forward, draw the bases of their tails together, and insert his penis into her cloaca. It's a difficult, Kamasutra-like position, in which they look like mating Swiss Army knives.

"Have you ever seen crocodilians mating out of water?" I ask Kent.

"No, I haven't, but it's been reported a couple of times."

"In the National Geographic film, you were swimming in the lake. Do you still do that?"

He secures a roped alligator to one of the walkway's stanchions. "No," he says. "I haven't done that in a long time."

"How come you stopped?"

"Because I didn't need to do it anymore," he says wearily. "Anyway, it was starting to become a circus. People went crazy when they saw me out in the water, up to my neck with the gators. I had begun swimming with the alligators for two reasons. I was pretty sure that they were communicating with subtle visual signals—slight changes in body posture and body elevation in the water, things like that. But, being on this boardwalk looking down on them, I wasn't able to see those slight changes very well. I thought that if I could get at an alligator's eye level it would be pretty easy for me at least to see what's relevant to an alligator. That was the first reason. The second was that at that time I was studying courtship behavior, and I thought that if it was possible to swim with the gators and if I made up a fake alligator and actually went out and could stimulate them into courtship with this fake alligator it would be a wonderful experiment. I'd be able to intensify or eliminate acts of courtship and see what effect it had on their response."

"What did you make the fake alligator out of?"

"I took the skull of an alligator, filled it with foam to make it neutrally buoyant, painted it to look like a live animal, and hung it on a big pole, and I swam out with it."

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"Do you think they believed it was a gator?"

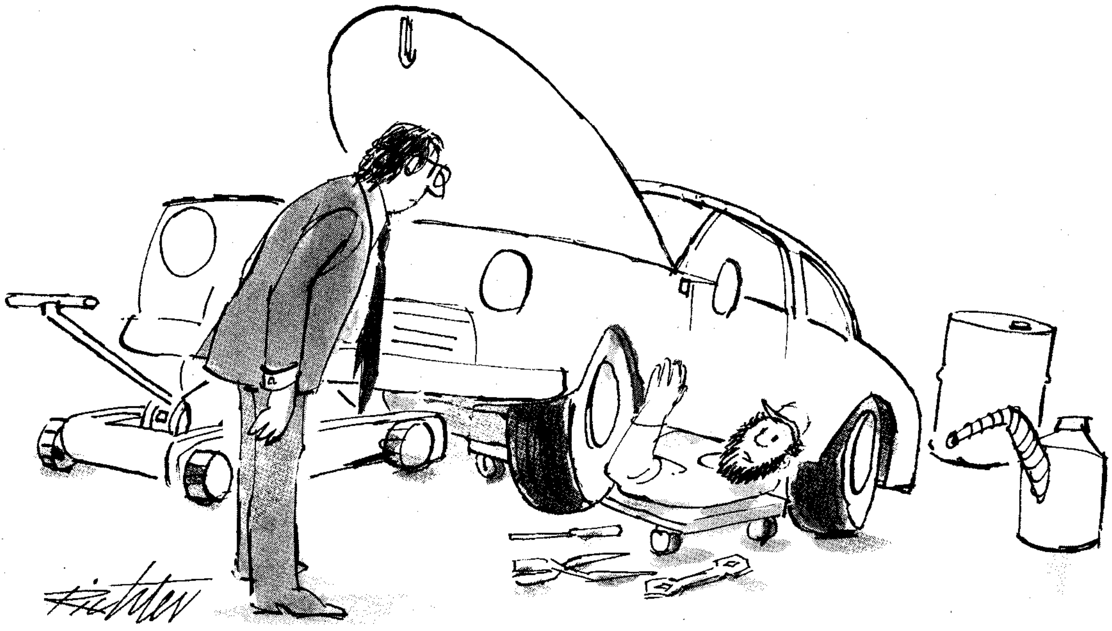
"I think they did initially, and then after a while they realized that it was a setup. We called it 'syn-gator,' and I could never get an alligator to remain interested for any length of time."

"Maybe the model alligator didn't smell right."

"I'm sure it didn't smell right, and it didn't move right—maybe it didn't hit hard enough in courtship, or something. It was really very interesting for me, though. There was a lot I learned. I usually talk about courtship being a very slow and gentle process—it looks as if they're just sliding up to each other and bumping each other along. But there's a hundred-and-twenty-five-pound female and a four-hundred-pound male in the water, and when they start to bump, it's something you can really feel. Courtship involves a lot of pressing, which is an extremely important behavior to both individuals. It allows each of the alligators to judge the size and fitness of the partner. The alligator doing the pressing can feel how strong the lower alligator is when it's resisting, and the lower alligator can feel how strongly it's being pressed. When I played around with this fake head, I would press it right on top of an alligator, and I could actually lean on that gator with all my weight, and I couldn't budge the gator an inch. And yet they dunk each other left and right. They're immensely powerful."

Kent performed his courtship mummery in spring, the courting season. In winter, alligators stop eating and become lethargic. People imagine them to be voracious eaters, whose razory jaws feed a limitless appetite, but the truth is that alligators eat infrequently—perhaps as little as once a week—in the spring and summer, and in the winter they don't eat at all. Alligators don't actually hibernate; their metabolism lowers with colder temperatures, and they fast. In the wild, an alligator digs a hole into a riverbank with its feet, mouth, and tail, or it lies on the bottom of a lake or a flooded grassland to await the warmer weather. Their dens make them good citizens. Because "gator hole" ponds are usually deep enough to stay wet through the dry season, they support whole communities of animals. Even cattle sometimes water at gator holes.

These days, civilization inadver-



"You might be interested in our encounter group for people with transmission problems."

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tently creates ponds suitable for crocodilians, too—on golf courses, in real-estate developments, and even in back of one power-and-light company in Miami, which was amazed to discover in its labyrinthine canals a nesting community of Florida's American crocodiles: they are chiefly estuarine animals, and are almost extinct in the wild. But then many crocodilians are seriously endangered. Except for the temperate alligators, crocodilians come from tropical and subtropical regions—if one drew a band of their habitats around the world, it would extend up through the United States to the northern part of North Carolina—and that means they live largely in developing countries. There they succumb to commercial hunting and mutilation. If the animal doesn't have a skin that is commercially valuable, then it is hunted by local people as a source of food. And some crocodilians simply lose their habitats to power plants and industry. Progress periodically steps on nature's toes, and there is not always much one can do about it. But high-fashion crocodilian products are strictly a luxury item: one needs a pair of shoes; one doesn't need a pair of crocodile shoes.

JUST below the walkway, a nose and a pair of bulbous eyes appear through duckweed scum on the water. It seems a fitting paradox that such a heavy, lumbering animal should live under a blanket of one of the world's smallest and most delicate flowers. Mixed with the duckweed is *Wolffia*, an even smaller plant. Almost as little is known about *Wolffia* as about alligators; it was only recently that its flower was photographed—through a scanning electron microscope. Heavy as the alligators are, they depend on the fragile plants for warmth. When the wind blows the duckweed down to one end of the lake, as it does occasionally, all the gators gather at that end. Today, the winds are calm; a thick, even blanket of confetti-size leaves floats on the water, and the two dark eyes peering up at us like twin snorkels are coated with the greenish-yellow flecks. Kent runs to the rail and drops a rope noose in front of the animal's head. Carefully, he slides the noose over the head and onto the thick heavy neck muscles and pulls up sharply, closing the noose. A few minutes later, he lassos another alligator. Now that there are two to work with, our team goes into action, getting hypodermic needles ready, and a logbook, a tape measure, a roll of electrician's black tape, and the other tools of an alligator biologist's trade. Kent climbs over the fence and into the shallow lake, takes the free end of the rope as if it were a leash on a miniature schnauzer, and begins pulling the alligator onto a small, tree-studded island.

"Could sure use some help here!" he calls.

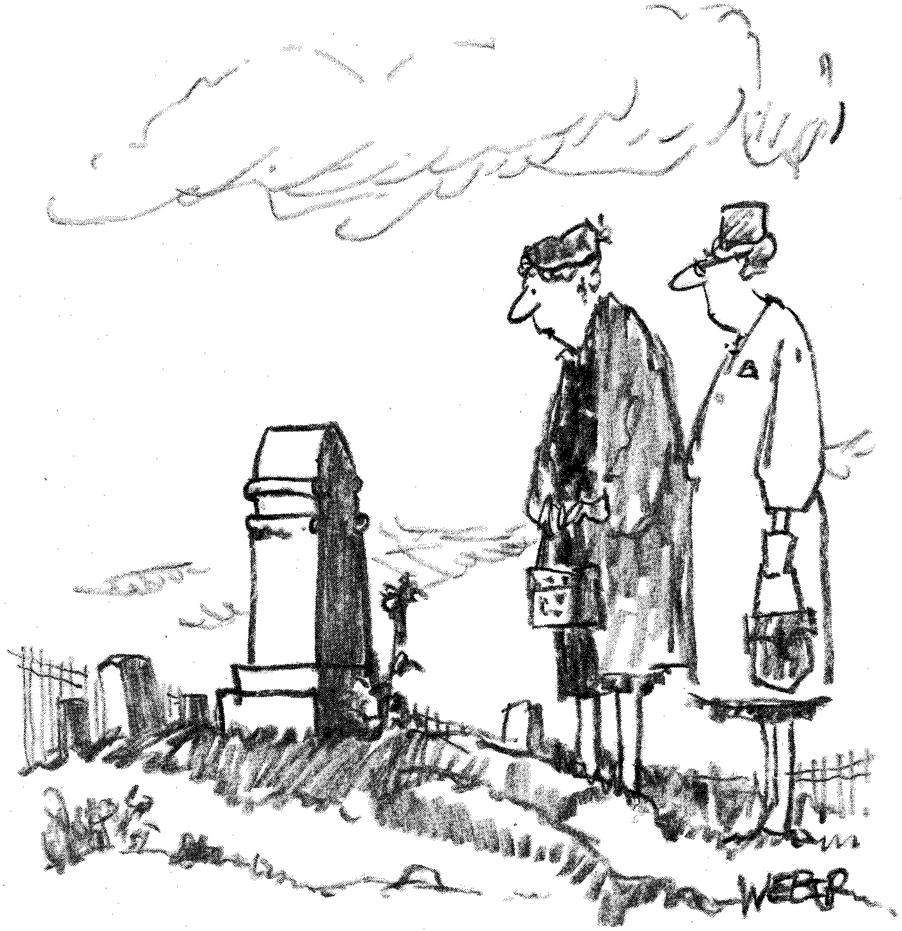
Lou and John scramble over the fence and step carefully through the water (gators might be sliding along the bottom), and I follow.

"Watch your feet! Watch the water! Watch under the boardwalk!" Kent warns me as I walk right behind Lou and John, trying to place my feet where they have placed theirs. By now, Barry and Jimmy have picked up lassos and begun roping gators in different sections of the lake. A tug-of-war crew secures each animal to a tree, a fence post, or a boardwalk stanchion. Pulling together on the rope, Kent and Lou and John and I try to hoist our animal out of the water, but it thrashes about, waving its enormous head and then suddenly hurling itself into a series of fast rolls—an alligator's typical getaway move.

"O.K. Back off a little," Kent directs as the rope spins in our hands. "Let him wear himself out a bit." We let the rope go slack. As soon as the gator levels out, we heave again, and this time drag it onto the shore, where I tie the rope to a strong tree. Now the alligator opens its mouth in a toothy threat display and hisses long and loud. A real, full-bodied textbook *hissss* that jangles your nerves and makes your shoulders cringe. *Hissss*. It's the first time I have ever truly understood the word. What's more, I seem to have backed up. So have the others—all except Kent and John, who perform these rites often and move deftly, with a kind of informed nonchalance, at just the right distance from the jaws, which the alligator swings in a wide arc.

"They can lunge," Kent says, making a back-it-up motion with his open palms.

What a strange, beautiful creature the alligator is, with its bulging eyes and stubby legs and powerful jaws and rows of sharp teeth, and a thick white tongue, and the pointy "scutes" that give an alligator's hide its distinctive look of armor. The alligator's eyes, es-



"I told him it wouldn't kill him to try to be nice once in a while, but I was wrong."

• •

pecially, fascinate me. All crocodilians have a transparent eyelid, or "nictitating membrane"—goggles of a sort—to protect the eyes while the animal is swimming underwater. They also have football-shaped pupils, which stay vertical to the horizon when the head is tilted, if the angle isn't too great; the eyeball moves, so vision won't be distorted. It's a handy adaptation. The secret of alligator wrestlers' ability to put an alligator to sleep—or "hypnotize" it, as they sometimes brag—may be that when you turn an alligator upside down you disorient it, disturb its equilibrium, and upset its eyes' ability to focus. Naturally, it lies still, as a human being with severe vertigo would. Another feature of the eyes has contributed to the near-extinction of the species: crocodilian eyes reflect light. Cruise the Okefenokee Swamp at night, hold a flashlight against your forehead, and shine it toward the shore, and you're likely to see pairs of burning coals—alligator eyes. A perfect target for hunters. Many other animals' eyes shine, too, and for the same reason: they have a thin reflective layer, the *tapetum lucidum* (Latin for "bright carpet"), which acts as a mirror, just behind the retina.

On a trip to the Amazon, I went out in an inflatable Zodiac at sunset to "shine" caiman eyes along the shore. But there were precious few caimans to shine, since, like the manatees that once inhabited the river, they have been overhunted for food, hides, and souvenirs. The "baby alligators" that tourists used to take home from Florida were really baby caimans. The souvenir-doll "alligators" wearing top hats and tuxedos, or dressed as doctors, lawyers, or professors (complete with pince-nez), tend to be baby caimans, too. But it's easy to confuse the three main types of crocodilians, for they look similar in a lot of ways, especially if there isn't time to check the animals thoroughly.

Here are some general rules of thumb: Alligators and caimans have round snouts, whereas most crocodiles have pointed, triangular snouts. Alligators' nostrils have a space between them and look like a V that doesn't meet at the bottom, whereas most crocodiles' nostrils are very close together. Alligators have much less aggressive personalities than many crocodiles. If you can see both the upper and the lower teeth, the animal is probably a crocodile; but alligators have more teeth (eighty) than crocodiles (seventy). Crocodiles look speedier, more hydrodynamic than alligators, and several species are renowned for their savagery. Gharials are mild-mannered fish-eating crocodilians with long, slender, graceful snouts, and the elderly males have a big knob right at the end. And caimans look like alligators but have short, blunt snouts. Within the order of crocodilians, there are twenty-nine different forms, including such rapacious and unpredictable predators as the Nile crocodile, which kills more people in East Africa in a year than any other wild animal except the hippopotamus (but this, of course, is a trivial number compared with the yearly deaths from auto accidents, malaria, sleeping sickness, and AIDS), and the gigantic saltwater crocodile of Australia, New Guinea, Indonesia, and other places, which can grow to a length of about twenty-three feet and is responsible for a number of supposed shark attacks. These "salties" usually live in the brackish waters of coastal mangrove swamps and tidal rivers but also make their way into freshwater rivers from time to time. They are not only unpredictable, they're athletic, and have been reported by locals to stalk their prey. These are the crocodiles that newspapers like the *National Enquirer* often feature, with such headlines as "I FOUGHT OFF A MAN-EATING MONSTER WITH MY BARE HANDS." In this particular story, which appeared last December, a man swimming near his yacht in the Solomon Islands reports, "I screamed in excruciating agony as the crocodile sank its teeth into my back and chest and shook me like a floppy little rag doll." The Cuban crocodile, although not a "man-eater," is apparently not an animal to be casual around, either. But there are also shy and retiring crocodilians, like the African dwarf crocodile, the smooth-fronted caimans, the American alligator, and its cousin the Chinese alligator, which Marco Polo wrote about in the thirteenth century.

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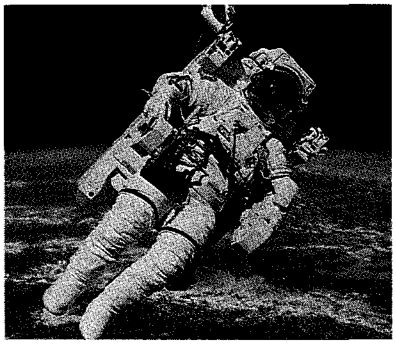

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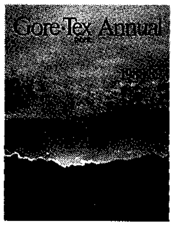

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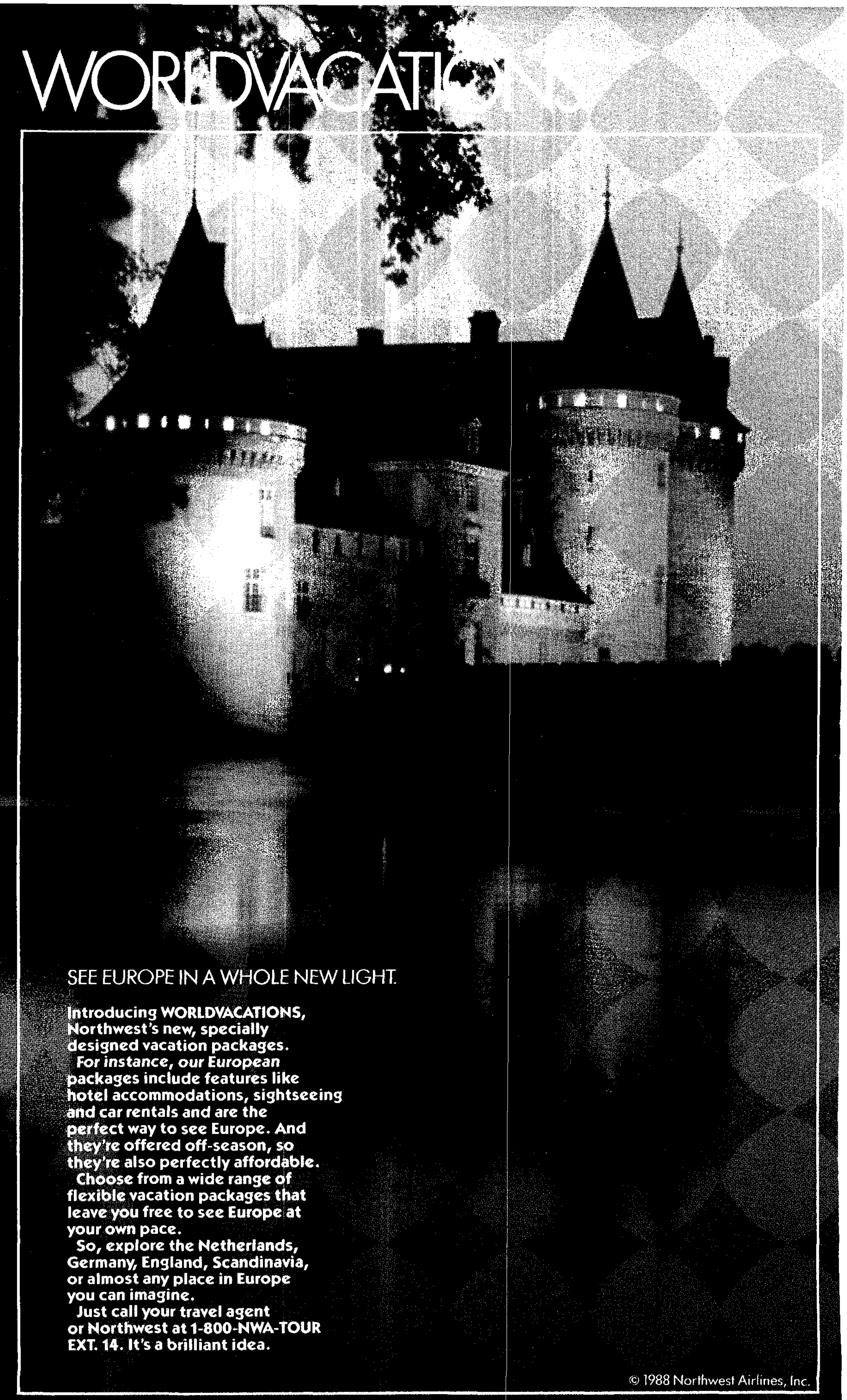

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“*It's so-so.*”

lagarto means “the lizard,” and is where the word “alligator” probably comes from), but there is no way of telling from the outside whether it's a male or a female. It begins a low, snarling growl. Sneaking up behind it, Kent climbs onto its back, tucks his knees behind its front legs, as if he were a jockey getting into position, and, at the same time, presses its head against the sand, so that the mouth closes. Then he reaches a hand around and under each side of the jaws, as if he were gripping a big sandwich in two hands, holds the jaws closed, leans back, and lifts the head.

“Tape!” he calls.

Debbie runs up with the tape and wraps it around the jaws half a dozen times. Then Kent sets the head back down. The alligator can still swing its head like a club, but it can't open its jaws to bite. Alligators have large, steely muscles for clamping shut on prey. Though it's virtually impossible for even the strongest man to open an alligator's mouth once it has closed on something, the muscles for opening the mouth are very weak. Kent is a strong man, but holding a gator's jaws shut is a question of leverage more than of sheer muscle. Now the alligator lifts its left rear leg, tucking it close to its body, and Kent quickly shifts his weight, so that the animal doesn't roll. Then he slides a large palm right over its eyes and, at last, it quiets down.

“Want to hold the eyes?” he asks me.

Kneeling on the sand directly in front of the taped jaws, I wait for Kent to raise his hand. The bulging eyes pop up. When I rush my hands toward them, the nictitating membrane slides across from front to back, the top and bottom eyelids close, and, when I press down, the eyes drop down into the head. They feel springy under my palm. “Amazing,” I whisper. To observe how it happens, I lift my hand just a little, feel the eyeballs pop up, then see the eyelids open and the nictitating membrane float from back to front, the elliptical pupils perfectly vertical. I replace my hand, and the eyes vanish back into the head. Meanwhile, Kent has inserted a hypodermic needle through the skin just behind the head and withdrawn a syringeful of blood. He hands the syringe to Lou, and Lou labels it and puts it in a fishing-tackle box.

“You want to sex it?” Kent asks me invitingly as he leans back and holds up the heavy tail, exposing the cloaca, in which the sex organs lie.

Debbie takes my place as blindfold, and I lean under the tail and slide my first two fingers inside the slit, which feels squooshy and cool. “I don't feel anything special in there,” I report. My fingers withdraw covered with a heavily sweet, pungent musk. Both male and female gators give off musk, and scientists think there may be both waterborne and airborne portions of it. After a gator bellows, there is often an oily sheen on the water all around it.

John double-checks. “Female,” he confirms.

But Kent has already smelled the musk in the air and recognized it as female. Cautiously, he climbs off, and Debbie and Sylvia measure the head, the body, and the total length, calling out each number of centimetres—“Twenty-nine,” “A hundred and five,” “Two hundred and eleven”—as if they were ordering a suit. John attaches a small numbered band to the webbing between the toes of a hind foot. Kent paints a broad orange stripe on the gator's nose with a grease crayon, so we'll know not to catch it again today, and, finally, checks its general condition. Then he climbs carefully onto the next gator, which is tied to a nearby tree, and the ritual begins again. “Try sexing this one,” he says, holding up an even heavier tail.

When I insert my fingers in its cloaca, I feel a slippery hard length. “*Mister* Gator. No doubt about it.”

“It's not so easy,” Kent cautions. “A female alligator has a clitoris, and sometimes you can feel it way up in the cloaca. That can make sexing alligators very confusing.”

“Does this mean that a female alligator can have an orgasm?” I ask.

“Well, we don't know,” Kent says. “Don't know about sperm transport, either. But there aren't muscular ejaculations in the male. Crocodilians have relatively short bouts of copulation—two to three minutes—compared with other reptiles. To answer the orgasm question we'd have to do hormone-levels or muscle-contraction analysis during copulation, and that would be very difficult. They're pretty private about mating. And they don't make good laboratory animals when they're big enough to mate. They'd tear the place apart. I knew a scientist once who worked with monitor lizards in a lab, even had them walk treadmills, but gators are too stubborn to walk a treadmill. They'd probably just lie there and be carried along by it. So I don't think we're going to find out certain things for quite a while."

Across the lake, a medium-sized alligator basks on the shore. After setting our two sampled alligators free, most of us climb over the rail and race along the walkway. Kent just wades across, a lasso in one hand, but he looks around cautiously as he moves. John gets there first, just in time to grab the tail as the gator dives into the water. Then Barry and I grab the tail, too, and, with all three of us hanging on, we manage to keep the gator from escaping, but we're not strong enough to drag it onto land. To get a rope around its middle would be difficult, and its head is flailing somewhere under the duckweed-coated water. Looking for the head, Kent puts a hand straight into the dark water where he thinks the head should be, as calmly as if he were reaching into a vest pocket.

"Mouth is open, damn it," he says, withdrawing his hand. Then he tries again.

"Are you crazy?" Debbie screams as Kent's hand disappears below the water again, and the gator begins to thrash so hard that it unsettles our footing. It looks like a scene from an ancient cautionary tale about wrestling with the Leviathan.

Actually, some researchers insist that the "Leviathan" mentioned in the Bible really is a crocodile. Peloubet's Bible Dictionary says, "In Job 41:1 and Psalms 74:14, the crocodile is without a doubt the animal intended." Job 41 has a long descriptive passage about the rigors of fighting the Leviathan, of which the following is a sample:

> Who can open the doors of his face? His teeth are terrible round about. His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. One is so near to another, that no air can come between them. . . . His eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.

What a lovely description of the day opening its many veils just as a crocodilian opens its elaborate eyelids! Crocodilians were almost certainly the dragons of yore. In Chinese, the alligator is called *tulong*, or "earth dragon," and the etymology strongly suggests that the Chinese dragon began with myths about the alligator. Knights may have fought large crocodilians in the Near East, or they may have simply mythologized the dragons' size and ferocity. Dragons were often depicted as fire-breathing, and alligators can emit vapor from their nostrils when they bellow; to the magic-loving eyes of the Middle Ages the vapor might have looked like smoke.

Finally, John does manage to slide a noose safely over the gator's hips, and we haul it up onto the shore, hissing and growling, its jaws snapping. It swings its head at us in an irritated bluff but doesn't charge. Quickly, Kent slips a noose over the head, tightens it on the large, muscular neck, and ties the alligator to a nearby tree.

"You want to try this one?" Kent asks me.

"Absolutely." I step forward.

"Wait—get farther away from the

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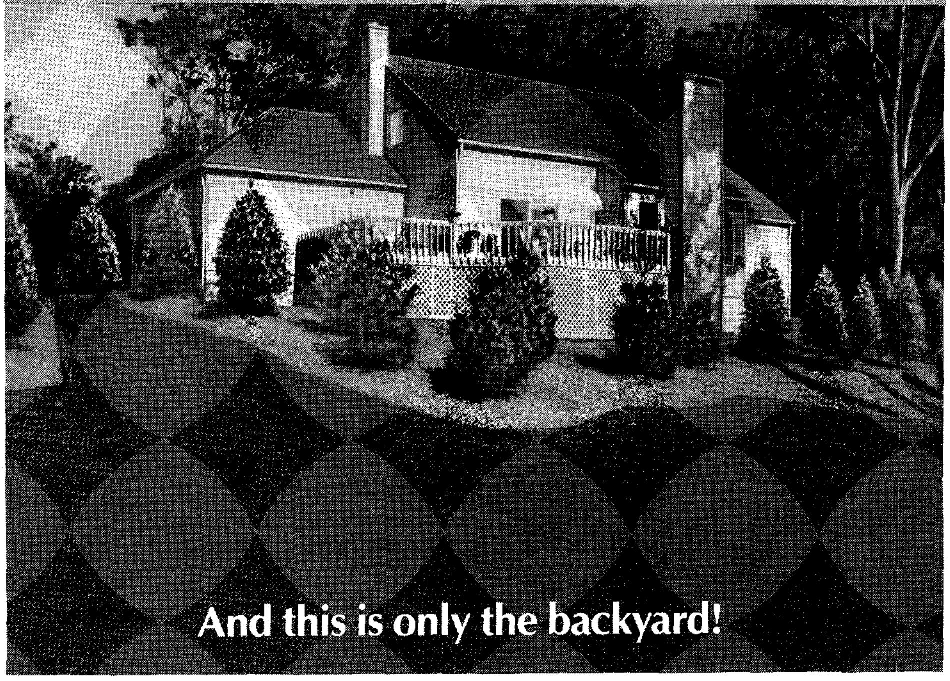

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head," he says. "Gators can strike fast, and—remember?—I said they can lunge. Swing around behind it. Move in fast and confidently and get the eyes covered as soon as possible, and be sure to keep your knees behind its front legs, so it can't swing its jaws around and bite your leg."

"Right." In one quick motion, I climb onto its back, tuck my knees behind its front legs, run a palm down its forehead to cover the eyes, and push the mouth closed against the dirt. I give both of us a moment to quiet down, then slide my hands under its bottom jaw and quickly grab both jaws, holding them shut. What takes strength is lifting the heavy head up without falling forward, while at the same time holding the jaws tightly closed, so that Sylvia can tape them.

"Hurry! Hurry!" I tell her as I feel my grip weakening. Once the taping is done, I try to relax, and also quiet the alligator, by putting a hand over its eyes again. "What do you suppose is going through its mind?" I ask Kent, who is preparing the syringe.

"Not a thing," he says, grinning. "It's probably like a dial tone."

"I see you don't romanticize their intelligence."

Kent laughs. "They have a little—a tiny—brain," he says, his eyes opening wider with each diminutive. "Even the biggest animal we work with today will have a brain only about an inch long and half an inch wide. That's a *little* brain. But they're so capable at what they do, they're so well adapted to the kind of life they lead, that they just don't need higher brain functions. They're amazing for other reasons. They're perfect reptiles."

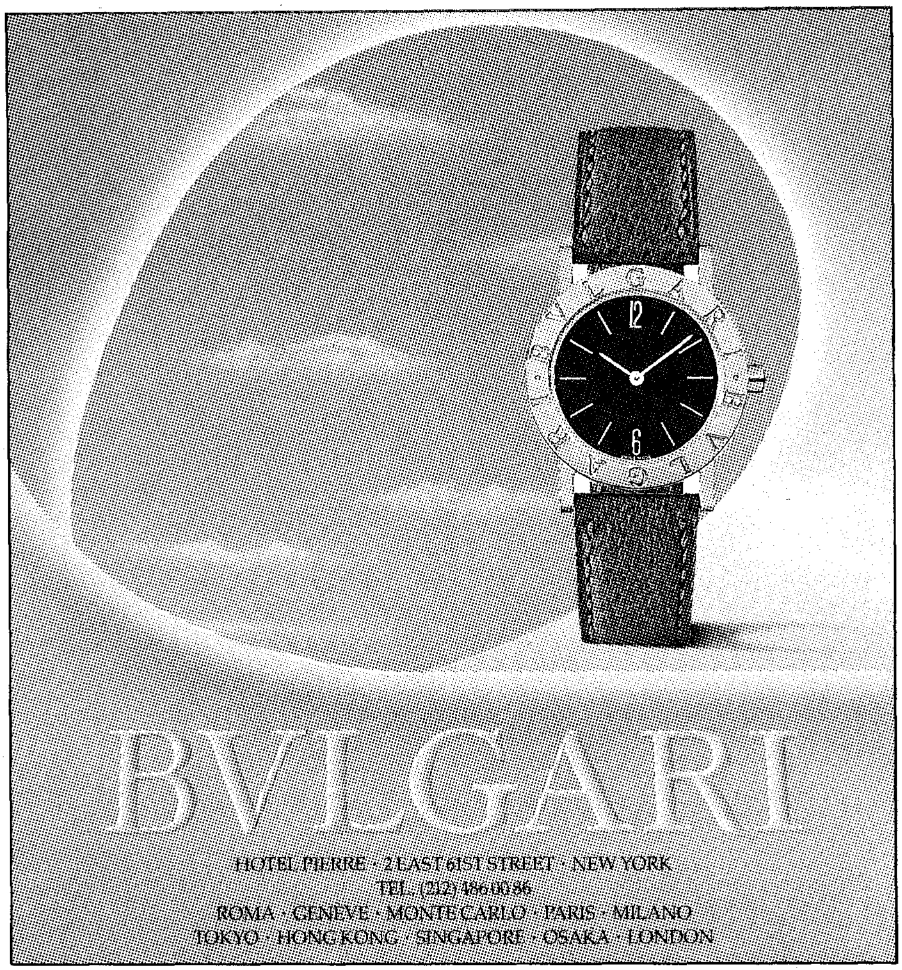
"What's the *essence* of being a reptile?"

"Taking energy when you can get it and never expending it unless you have to. They're just an extremely efficient energy system."

"Mammals must seem to you messy and extravagant by comparison."

"Mammals *are* extravagant. Mammals are high-speed race cars. Reptiles are B.M.W.s—really gas-efficient."

Actually, there are many advantages to being cold-blooded and getting your life energy from external sources—like basking in the sun—rather than from a private inferno you carry in your body. That inferno must be stoked carefully and kept at a precise heat. An alligator can't digest food if its body temperature



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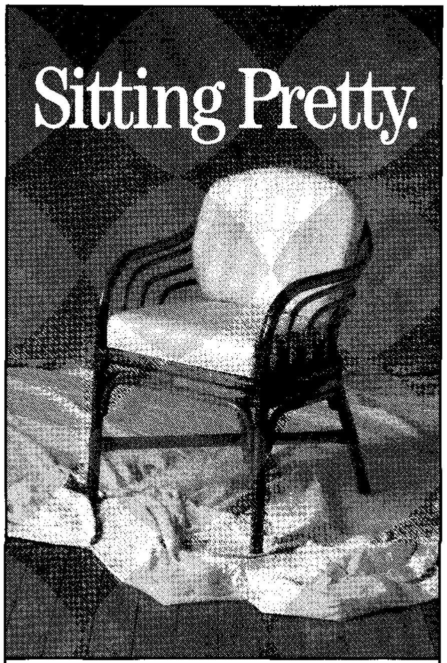
is too low. We can eat any old time, and often it probably doesn't do us much good—just makes us fat. The alligator can't do that. Nor is there anything vulgar about relying on a heat source outside your body. We human beings store information outside our brains, in writing. We help warm ourselves by burning wood, harnessing waterfalls, digging up coal, plumbing natural gas. We must eat to keep our temperature up, and most often we do that by heating our food to the steaminess of freshly killed prey. Out of our own warm-blooded bias, we see alligators and other cold-blooded animals as low, primitive, far less advanced than we, and lord it over them as the pinnacle of physiological adaptation. But what a misconception that is. That they're cold-blooded doesn't mean they're less well adapted than we are; they're just highly developed in a different direction—another one of the many ways in which life declares itself. And if we weren't such chauvinists we would admire how being cold-blooded allows them to seek out niches we're incapable of living in. Some years ago, the herpetologist Harvey Pough, a professor at Cornell, worked out that it would be impossible for mammals to maintain a body size as small as that of a little frog or fish—perhaps only two and a half or three millimetres long. Our sort of metabolism couldn't manage it. It's also impossible for us to have an elongated body, like a snake's, a lizard's, or a salamander's, because we'd lose too much heat; our metabolic rate would need to be phenomenal to keep that long body warm. There are lots of pluses to being cold-blooded, but we high-handedly ignore them. One is that it allows a reptile to become something as efficient as an alligator, which may catch only three or four good meals a year, and the rest of the time not worry about eating. Reptiles lose little energy, because they're not hot-rodding around the landscape, busily burning up their energy stores. Even when warm-blooded animals lie still or sleep, most of them are at fast rev, burning up energy to maintain their body heat. If we mammals don't get something to eat every day or two, all our signs fall low, and we starve. Since we live at biological red alert, it's not surprising how obsessed we are with food; I'm amazed that we don't pace and fret about it all the time. There are many advantages to being a reptile.



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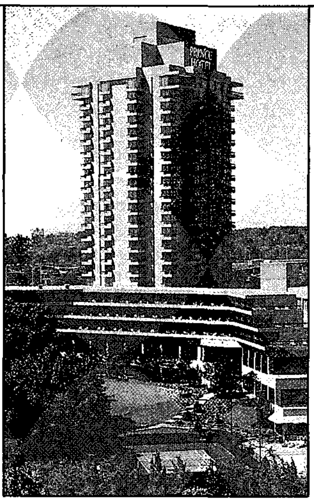

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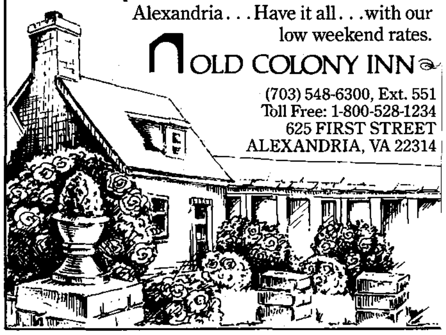

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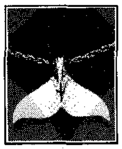

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"One big problem for scientists is that it's hard for us, who are built on a very fast time clock, to perceive cause and effect in alligators' behavior, because they're built on a slower clock," Kent says. "I say something to you, and you respond immediately. When an alligator says something to another alligator, it may be fifteen or twenty minutes before the other responds. You really have to be paying attention to see cause and effect in their behavior. This poses a real problem for researchers. It's very difficult for us, as warm-blooded animals, to understand the behavior of a cold-blooded one."

When children see our troupe of gator-handlers at work, they beg to join in. Why are children charmed by such violent predators as crocodilians, which aren't at all cute and cuddly but tear their victims apart with melodramatic savagery? (Usually, crocodilians do the tearing apart while rolling, and two may grab a single animal and roll in opposite directions to rip it apart.) Dinosaurs are so big that they defy a child's comprehension. Children play with them as little things, as toys. In museums children do see them full-sized, but only as skeletons or reproductions—not alive—so the monsters stay totally mythic and, above all, *dead:* sealed forever in the safety zone of the past. But alligators and crocodiles are ferociously alive, yet children would climb right into the water with them and try to play if their parents didn't prevent it. On the other hand, adults often ask us what we are being paid, and when we say "Nothing" they shudder, and yell to us across the lake, "There isn't enough money in the world to make me do that!" As a final gesture, one man swats the air, slamming an invisible door on the whole idea, and says, "I'd *never* do that. *No way*. I mean *never!*" Yet, leaning against the wooden rail of the walkway, he shields his eyes from the sun and goes on watching us for a long time. Whenever I look up, he is there, quietly shaking his head no, as if in answer to some prolonged question.

Sitting on an alligator is an ideal way to learn about its anatomy. Some people think that "alligators wear a built-in ugly job," as one writer put it. If so, they haven't studied an alligator closely. Alligators have beautiful undulating skin, which feels dense, spongy, and solid, like a good

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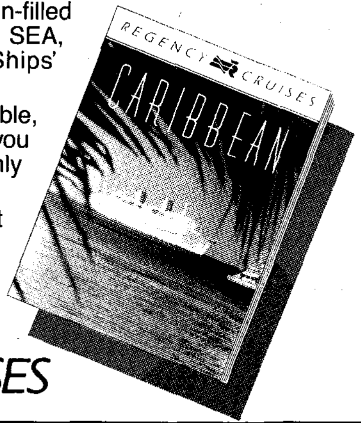

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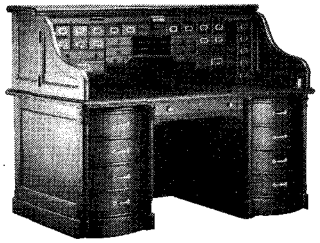

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eraser. And they're full of anatomical surprises. The nostrils are surrounded by strong muscles. Leaning forward, I touch the nostrils with my fingertips and, in response, the nostrils squeeze closed and then open again. An alligator is efficient underwater—hydrodynamic and sleek. Not only does it protect its eyes and close its nostrils; it can close a pair of movable ear lids, and seal off its throat with a wide curtain of flesh. The throat curtain is especially important, because it keeps the alligator from drowning when it drags its prey underwater. Though an alligator has a four-chambered heart like that of a mammal, it can reroute its blood and actually reduce circulation to the lungs while it's submerged. And you'd think an alligator would have an excellent sense of smell, because it can close off the glottis and throat, isolate the nostrils, and direct a small sniff of air straight into its olfactory chamber.

Kent draws a wide stripe of orange grease crayon down this gator's nose.

"Can alligators smell as well as sharks can?" I ask.

"Oh, no, they don't smell nearly that well," he says. "I mean, they aren't smelling anything *in* the water—they're smelling airborne particles. Their nostrils are closed underwater."

"So if you cut yourself in the lake they couldn't home in on the blood?"

"Not unless they might be able to taste it. You know, they don't have any lips, so stuff goes in their mouths very easily. They have pretty good sight, their hearing is pretty good. I wouldn't say that they were highly evolved in any of their senses, but they're very fine predators because they're *generalists*—all their senses are good *enough*. I think that's the key to their survival."

"Generalists make the best predators? Have you told that to your department chairman?"

"I bet he already knows it."

WHEN you look down on an alligator, if you let your sense of perspective go you'd swear you were flying over the Rockies at thirty thousand feet. Its back is covered with miniature mountain ranges—horny plates that pucker and interfold and are geometrically arranged. Only the top of the alligator has these spiky ridges. Alligator-hide apparel is made from the smooth, soft skin of the sides and belly. By wearing their skins on our feet and over a shoulder like talismans,

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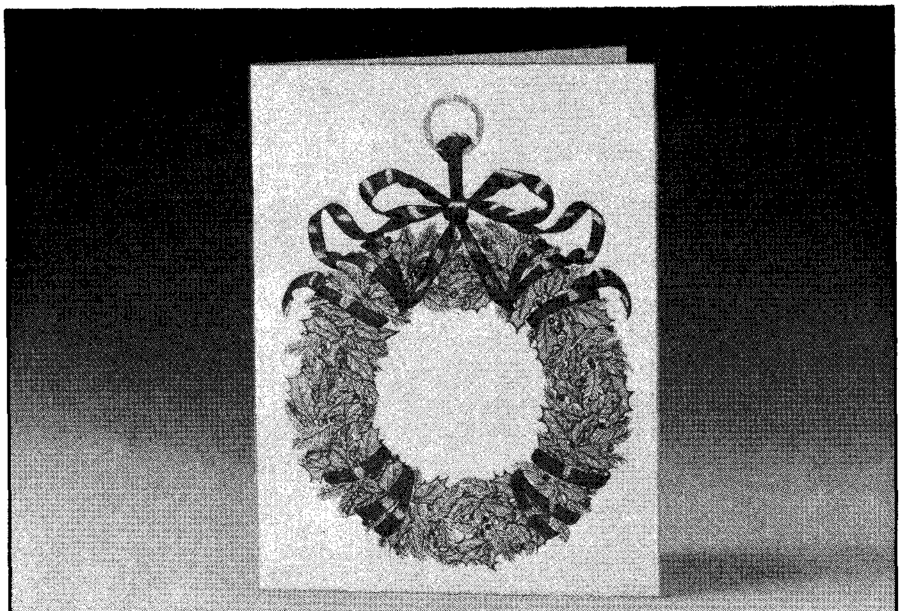
we have, I suppose, domesticated them in a strange way. Some people carry alligator briefcases and luggage, in which they tame parts of their lives. The naturalist George Campbell claimed to know of a couple in Texas who paid thirty thousand dollars for a his-and-hers matching pair of alligator sports jackets. That a creature so beautiful, wild, and mysterious could be turned into a handbag or a pair of shoes chills me.

Peter Brazaitis, who was the superintendent of reptiles at the Bronx Zoo for many years, is now the assistant curator of animals at the new Central Park Zoo, and he told me a little about the history of marketing crocodilian hides when I spoke with him recently in New York, just before he moved downtown. A slender, lightly tanned middle-aged man, wearing a khaki shirt and earth-brown trousers with a brass belt buckle in the shape of a sea turtle, he sat down with me at a conference table in front of a National Geographic wall map of the world. Through the open office doors I saw the back entrances to some of the exhibits in the Reptile House. On each door was the warning "THINK BEFORE YOU OPEN." I hadn't realized that officials of the Bronx Zoo wore large badges in the shape of law-enforcement shields until I saw Peter's —No. 503—pinned at heart level. It gave him the look of a symbolic knight. "Up until and right through the sixties, there was great commercial pressure to hunt these animals," he said. "For one thing, technology had improved. Airplanes could get into very remote areas, so it became easy to bring skins out of previously inaccessible regions and sell them on the international market. By the end of the nineteen-sixties, it was clear that many species of crocodilians were on the verge of extinction. Some of the most critically endangered were the Chinese alligator, the American alligator, the Orinoco crocodile, and the Cuban crocodile, but almost every species of crocodilian became deeply endangered or, at least, threatened. Any of the animals that had a beautiful, classic skin, which made the best leather, were right at the brink of extinction. You see, the industry would use a species until it exhausted it, and then switch to another species, and just go on down the line. At the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies, CITES,



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the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, was formed, as part of the United Nations. The signators of its treaty agreed to abide by certain rules in taking some species and recognizing that others were endangered or nearly extinct, and they agreed to provide protection. In the United States, we went a step further. We passed the Endangered Species Act, and what it did was insure that we would abide by the regulations of the CITES treaty. In addition, our list included other animals that we felt were endangered, even though CITES hadn't yet flagged them as endangered. Each of the countries that signed CITES became an enforcement agency, a real watchdog for the other countries. If a species was protected in Brazil, its importation into the United States or any other CITES country was automatically prohibited. And this is the way it remains to this day."

"Surely that helped the animals," I said.

"That's what one would think, and it did save a number of species," Peter replied. "But that wasn't the problem. The real problem revolved around identification. If you look at a whole animal, you can tell exactly where it came from. You say, 'Yes, this is the jacare caiman.' But if you have it in a pair of shoes you have trouble, because the identifying characteristics of a particular species might not be visible on a small piece of its leather. Being able to prosecute violators or prohibit or refuse the importation of a particular group of skins really depends on being able to identify that species in trade. Many of the hides that came into the country could not be *legally* demonstrated to be endangered species, even though we knew they were.

"Let me give you a little perspective on the scope of the industry. We believe that the world market for all species of crocodilians is about two million skins a year. Of those two million, probably fewer than a hundred and fifty thousand come out of farms and ranches around the world. The rest are taken from wild populations. Let's say, for the sake of argument, that out of that figure one and a half million skins are of South American caimans. There are only a few countries in South America that allow the export of caiman skins; the traditional ones have been Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, and Paraguay. Brazil, on the other hand, has had no legal commercial hunting of any of its wildlife since 1967, by national law. What is happening is that huge numbers of skins are illegally taken out of Brazil, moved to Bolivia or Paraguay, and then exported to various countries around the world. Finally, they end up in Italy, France, or the United States."

"So endangered species are poached, and then their skins are smuggled through other countries, to throw the CITES nations off the track?"

"Yes. They get laundered. Commercial hunting is very well organized. The traffic routes for smuggling skins are basically the same as for smuggling drugs—Singapore, Hong Kong, Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia."

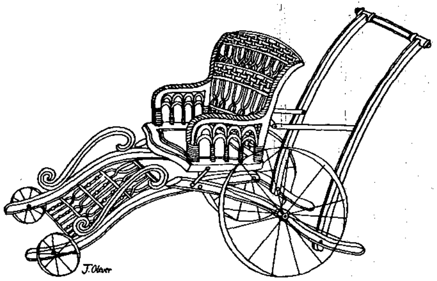
"Is the United States still importing endangered-crocodilian skins?"

"More than eighty per cent of all wildlife products come through the Port of New York, because most of the tanneries are in Europe—in Italy and France. And, unfortunately, there are fewer than two dozen inspectors for the entire Port of New York."

"Are they conversant with the skins? Can they tell what's what?"

"Only up to a point. If I were to look at a thousand caiman skins that came out of a particular country as a finished product, I would probably be able to identify with certainty, down to the level of subspecies, only about sixty per cent of them. And if I can't do better than that—and I happen to be one of three people in the world with that expertise—you can imagine the problem.

"American alligators' skins, when they were first exported, went for seven dollars and fifty cents a foot for, let's say, an average seven- or eight-foot animal. The same skin today, raw, is bringing forty-eight dollars a foot to the hunter. Every time the skin changes hands, from the hunter to the dealer, and on to the tanner, the importer, and the manufacturer, it almost doubles in price. In developing countries, someone poaching a crocodilian skin can derive a whole year's income from it. We just made it so profitable to break the law."



In 1967, the government declared alligators an endangered species, and hunting them, or even carrying them across a state line, was a federal crime—Kent still has to have a license to transport their blood. Ten years later, however, the Department of the Interior decided that the alligator had made an "amazing comeback," and demoted it from "endangered" to "threatened." This permitted a certain amount of supervised killing—or "harvesting," as it is euphemistically called. Most alligator people will tell you that it's impossible for so many animals to be born in such a short time, so what probably happened is that the shy animals felt safer in the open once people had stopped hunting them, and all of a sudden the swamps seemed packed with alligators. Now the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission has a Nuisance Alligator Control Program, for which it has hired the only people expert enough to hunt alligators—the ex-poachers it used to fine. George Campbell has observed, "This is a little like hiring bank security guards from the ranks of ex-bank robbers, on the ground that they possess the necessary skills."

WE don't encounter crocodilians much in our daily lives, but they're often on our minds. When we dub someone a "creep," we're comparing him with something reptilian, vaguely snakelike or alligatorlike, and we may go on to call him "low-down," or "cold-blooded." The cad might even cry "crocodile tears," and make our skin "crawl." "See ya later, alligator," we still sometimes say by way of goodbye, even if it is a phrase that was made popular in the thirties. Athletes drink Gatorade for stamina. There are all those goofy-looking crocodiles on tennis shirts. Why should the crocodile have become the mascot of yuppiedom? Despite our passion for totemic terms like my little bunny rabbit, my little pussycat, and so on, crocodilians never seem to enter into our menagerie of affection. My little alligator? My little saltwater crocodile? By far the best-known crocodilian is the one in "Peter Pan." As most of us remember, Barrie's crocodile had

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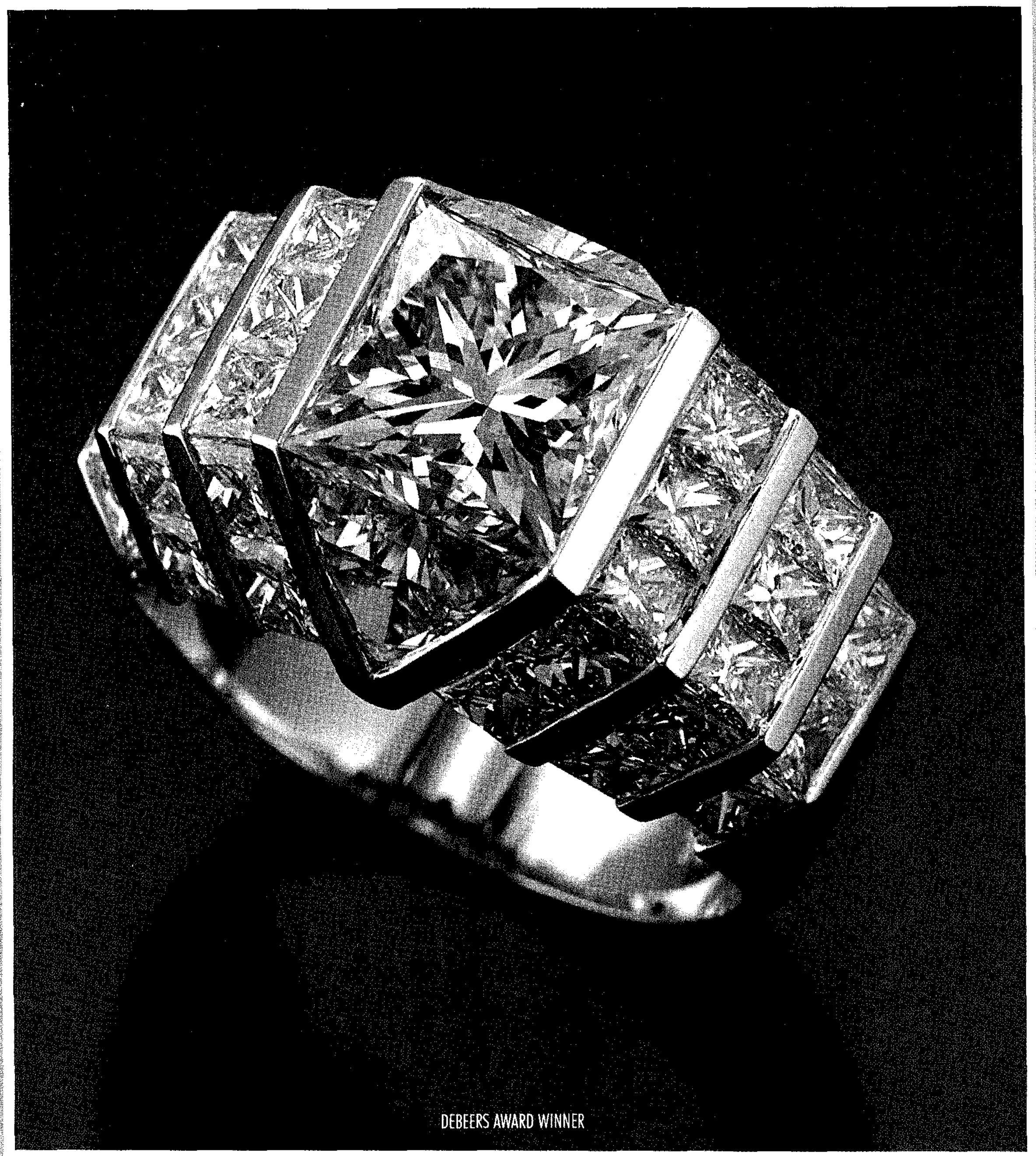

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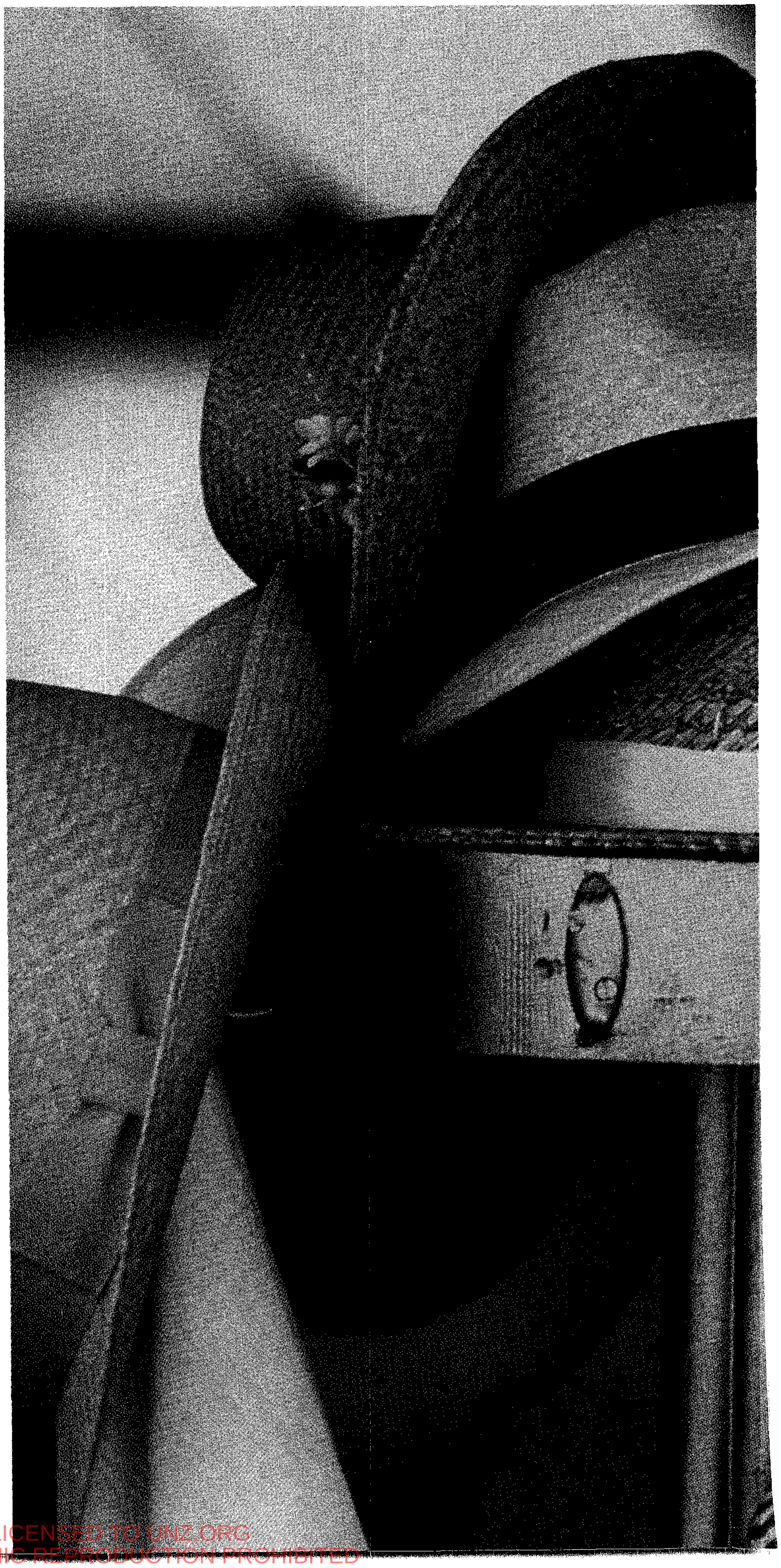
Friday at the races in Sussex.



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Observed in Philadelphia.

"Naturally, I lost my shirt. Why should this year be any different?"

"Was Enid there?"

"With her new husband, Mr. Tall and Witty."

"Did she talk about me?"

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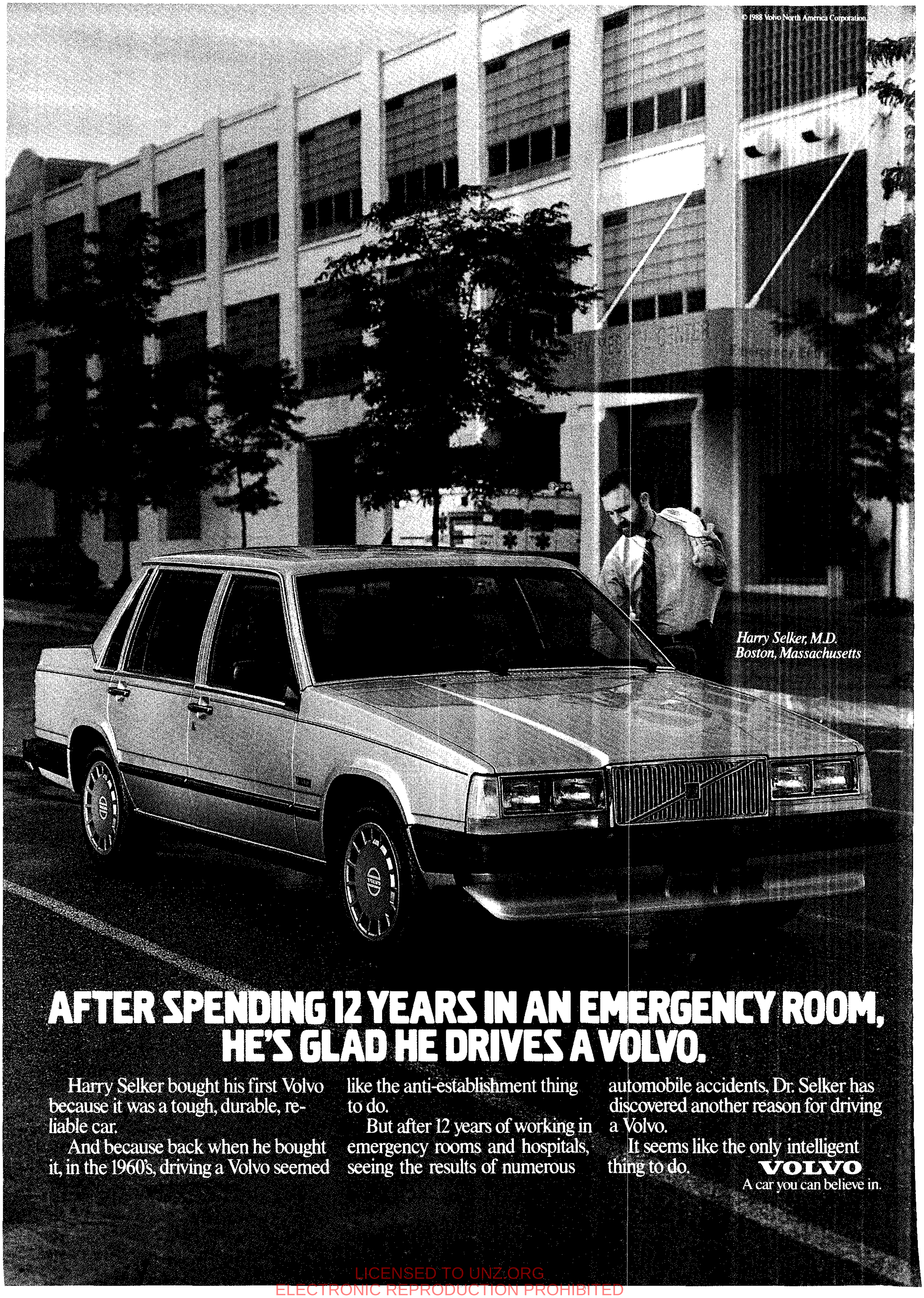

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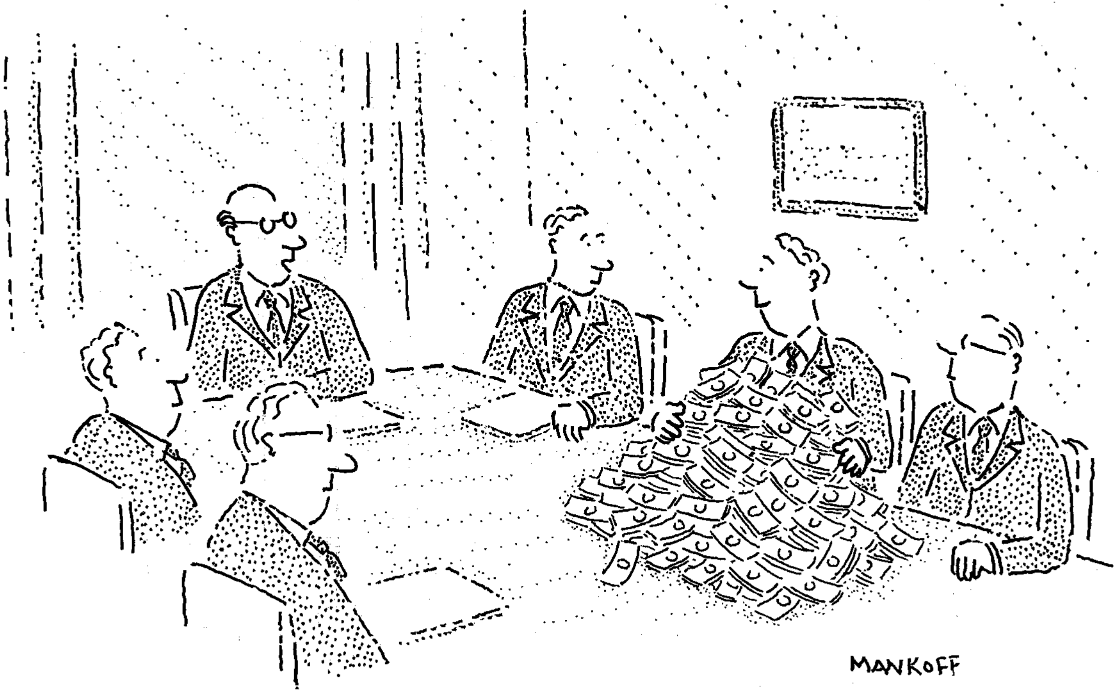
swallowed a clock, so "the way you got the time on the island was to find the crocodile, and then stay near him till the clock struck." Of course, he had also swallowed Captain Hook's severed arm and, as Hook lamented, "followed me ever since, from sea to sea and from land to land, licking its lips for the rest of me." This presupposes a certain endearing idée fixe on the part of the crocodile, but in a world where small children can "sniff danger" in their sleep revenge is the least one can expect of reptiles. Crocodilians are often seen as con reptiles, sleight-of-jaw artists. One minute, you think a log is floating beside you; the next, it's dragging you underwater. Crocodilians don't fight fair—that is, aboveground. Instead, they appear almost magically, as if conjured into being, and carry you off to an underwater realm where they have the advantage. And once they do grab you there's no negotiating. The jaws are sealed like a crypt. True, crocodilians don't figure much in monster films, but that's probably because filmmakers don't realize that crocodilians can run short distances on land, and climb fences and other obstacles.



"Come on, Barker, you've shown, now tell."

• •

It's just as well, because people are frightened enough of crocodilians. When the naturalist William Bartram explored Florida two hundred years ago, he wrote, "The alligators were in such incredible numbers, and so close together from shore to shore, that it would have been easy to have walked across on their heads, had the animals been harmless." Ever since, cartoonists and writers of adventure sagas have been obsessed with the idea of people walking or running over alligator heads. It really isn't possible, as the experience of a stuntman in the James Bond film "Live and Let Die" shows. To film Bond running across the backs of crocodiles, handlers tied weights to the crocodiles' feet in an effort to immobilize them and create a living raft. However, Roger Moore's stand-in kept slipping between the heads, and got bitten. The filmmakers did repeated takes of the scene, and ended up having to patch together both the scene and the stand-in.

NOW, in St. Augustine, I sit astride another alligator. Lifting one of its stubby front feet a little, I separate the five digits—the three inner ones with claws, the others without. When I glance behind me, I discover that the hind feet have only four digits—three with claws, the outside one without. The wide, powerful jaws serve to crush hard-shelled animals, like turtles. The tail's picket-fence scales look very dinosaurlike; an alligator uses its broad tail as an undulating paddle when it swims, but it may also use the tail as armament when it fights. John lifts up the tail of this alligator, and Sylvia checks inside the cloaca. It's a female. She is small, with healthy legs and loam-black eyes. Her scutes are still sharp, and that is unusual. Captive alligators frequently get worn smooth over the years just from climbing across one another. They act as living emery boards. The heads of captive alligators tend to spread, the way a human being's feet do in summer: because they spend so much time on land, their sheer weight flattens them. But this little female has a nice slim head, she is also relatively narrow-waisted, and as she shifts beneath me her muscles feel dense and powerful, thickly resilient, like coiled steel or solid rubber. Once the sampling and checking are done, a simple truth occurs to me, which I suspect was first commented on by an ancient Chinese sage: the hardest part of riding a dragon is getting off. Lifting my hand, I feel her eyes slowly popping up. Then the lids open, the transparent membrane pulls aside like a final vaudeville curtain, and she grows suddenly alert. Jumping up while falling backward, I stumble just enough to let her swing her head around fast and thwack me hard on the shin with her taped jaw. A bump starts to swell.

Kent wags a didn't-I-tell-you-to-be-careful finger at me. "Nothing bruises as bad as alligators bruise," he says. "When they get you, the bruise stays for four or five weeks. Figure they're hitting you with a solid club made of bone."

With a snake-handler's long pole, he loosens the lasso and slides it over the alligator's head. Then John pulls the tape off her jaws. She presses up onto her toes and starts to trot, in what's called a "high walk," back into the water. While the team of wranglers moves down the shore to the next two animals, I sit on a tree stump rubbing my shin and scouting the water for the female we just set free. She

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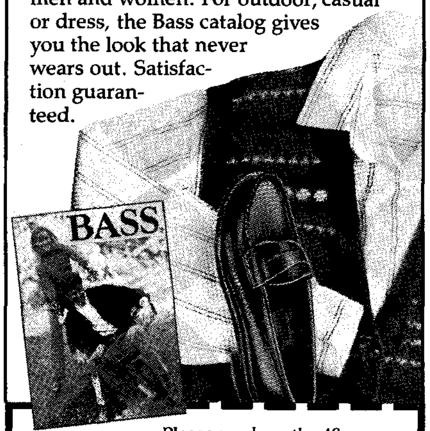

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surfaces a few yards away. Floating parallel to the shore, with just her nose and eyes showing, she watches me while I watch her.

As a lassoed alligator flails in the water, palm fronds hula nearby. A dozen white egrets fly from a tree. The alligators have turned the lake into a sanctuary for birds, which don't have to worry about prowling raccoons, cats, or other predators—including the alligators, since they are overfed and needn't bother with hunting. The alligators get processed chickens with vitamins, not live chickens or other live creatures. It's against zoo policy to feed live animals to other animals in public, so tourists don't get to see animals being what they really are. But then most people don't want to see that anyway.

"Lordy, he's big," Kent says as he straddles the back of the lassoed alligator and struggles to hold the colossal jaws tight for Lou to tape. "I know this guy. He's a dominant male. I saw him the day he busted his nose in a fight." The usually rounded nose has a piece missing and now looks like an M. The neck muscles hang as large as Christmas wreaths. The mottled black skin shines with wet mud. Near the end of the tail, a round hole, which once held a tag, looks ready for an oversized key chain. Even though Kent recognizes the animal, we perform all the tests. Lou gets a syringe ready, a little awkwardly, because he has a large bandage on one finger. Although he got the cut in his laboratory, people keep assuming that he was bitten by an alligator, and for the fourth time this morning he yells to a concerned visitor yes, he's O.K., no, he doesn't need to be rushed to a hospital, and, no, he wasn't wounded by a renegade alligator. Reaching inside the cloaca, I confirm that it's a male. John pats his pockets for the tape measure. It is noon. A cannon fires at the nearby St. Augustine fort. Then the sound of distant thunder fills the air. In the delft-blue sky, only one small cloud floats, and the sun is as bright as an anvil. A slow-motion thought occurs to me: I have just heard bellowing. The noon cannon set it off. I remember reading that in past years when a space shuttle flew over, making two sonic booms, all the alligators looked up and began a furious reply.

"Where's that coming from?" I ask quickly.

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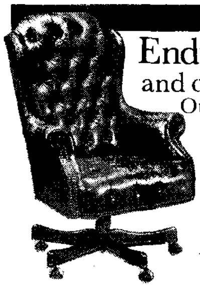

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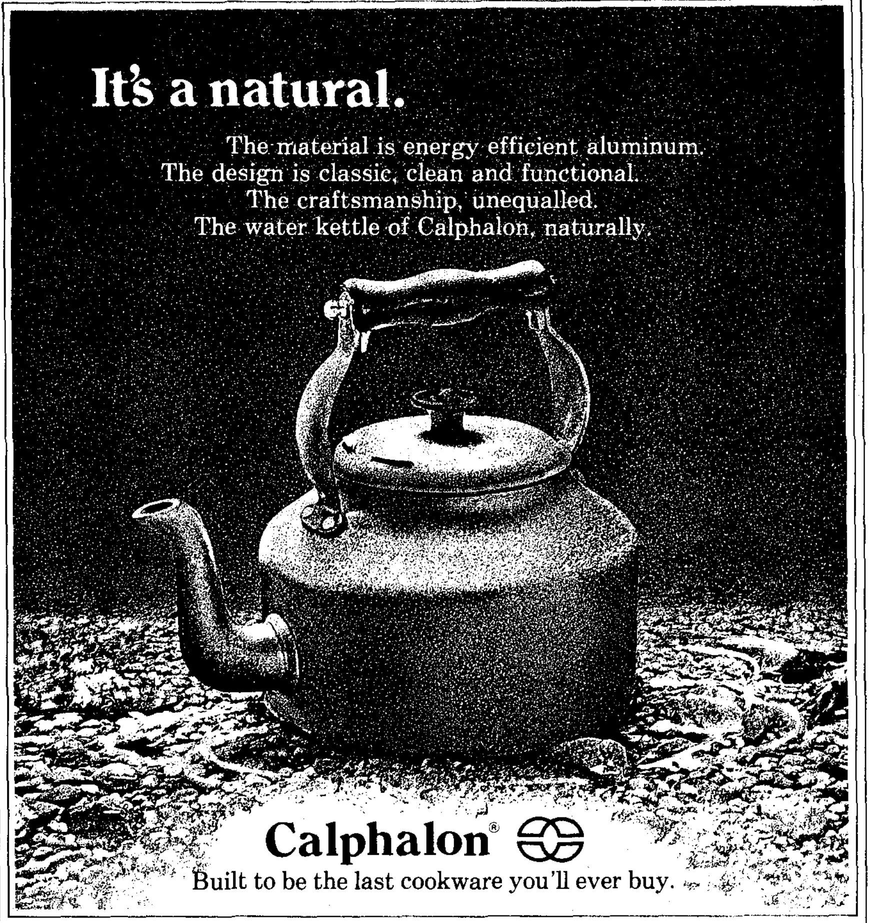
Kent hands Lou the syringe of blood and points across the lake. "Better hurry," he says. "But approach *quietly* when you get in range." Kent knows that what I want more than anything is to see the "water dance," a strange upside-down rain that alligators make when they bellow. I sprint through the trees and bushes, then climb a cyclone fence and run down a pathway, slowing up when I get to a large, tree-studded enclosure that contains a sinuous stream and a wide beach for basking, where close to a hundred and fifty male alligators loll, in and out of the sun. A high wooden fence corrals them. Quietly, I climb over, and crouch at a safe distance to watch. Surely they have seen me, but they are used to wet, mud-caked handlers, and anyway these alligators are well-fed, laissez-faire animals, who don't go looking for trouble. They just slither into slightly different positions. Sun streams through the trees as they languidly float around and on top of one another, drift apart, climb onto land, crawl into the shade, slide back into the water, where scaly tails and backs slowly weave together. It's like watching the breakup and reassembly of continents. A white tooth lying in the sand at my feet catches my eye, and I pick it up. Because alligator teeth are large and hollow, colonists used to fill them with gunpowder. Now I see that the sand is littered with teeth. Alligators lose teeth throughout their lives, and new teeth push up from the sockets to replace the old; in its life span, which parallels a human being's, an alligator may have as many as six thousand teeth.

A large alligator stretches high out of the water, swinging its tail up as a counterweight, so it can lift its enormous head. Then it puffs up its throat, and its tail waves like an Irish setter's. The water suddenly dances high all around its body in an effervescent fountain full of sparkle in the sunlight, and a thundering bellow fills the air like distant war games. Another alligator rises up with tail waving, gulps hugely, drops down, tenses up; then the water frizzles all around it, as if someone were spraying diamonds from an atomizer, and at last it bellows. Few sights are so astonishing.

I may *see* the water dance, but alligators *feel* the simultaneous subsonic signal, made only by male alligators, for some as yet unknown pur-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Lilla Cabot Perry (1848-1933)

Born in 1848, to the elite "Cabots of Boston," Lilla Cabot Perry received her early training under Robert Vonnoh and Dennis Bunker. In 1874 Lilla Cabot married Thomas Sargeant Perry, a Harvard professor of literature and the grandnephew of Commodore Matthew C. Perry. Fourteen years later the Perry family sailed for Europe, entirely benefited by monies earned by Lilla from a series of portraits painted of the daughters of the head of the Waltham Watch Company.

In Paris, Perry studied at the Académie Colarossi and the Académie Julian. Her later introduction to Claude Monet was to have the most profound effect upon the artist's work. For the next two decades Perry spent summers painting beside Monet in Giverny, where she became a close personal friend to the "Grand Man of Impressionism." Along with Mary Cassatt, Lilla Cabot Perry was instrumental in introducing impressionism to America.

In 1898 Thomas Perry accepted a teaching position at a Tokyo university. Lilla painted more than eighty canvases during their three years in Japan, studying the *Japonisme* style of painting which was then quite the rage with the Impressionists.

A return to America in 1901 enabled Perry to resume an active exhibition schedule. In 1904 she won a bronze at the St. Louis Exposition, and in 1915 another at the Pan-American Exposition. Though centered in Boston, Perry was to spend much of her years painting in Hancock, New Hampshire – an area reminiscent of Normandy. As a great American painter, Perry was to make important contributions both at home and abroad. Testimony to Lilla Cabot Perry's contribution is the small canvas which she left with her friend in Giverny.

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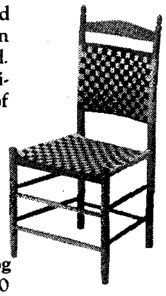
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pose. They use it in courtship but also among other males, perhaps to assert dominance. Or it may be, in part, the simple outcry that so many animals seem to make (and human beings, too) when, driven by some deep-down cosmic loneliness, they bay at the moon, or croak with swollen throats, declaring to the bright, blooming confusion of the universe the ever-surprising fact that they are alive: *Here is what I am. Here is who I am. Here is where I am.* Female alligators bellow, too, and slap their heads on the water with great panache, as males do, but they are not water dancers. It may be that females communicate in equally graceful and mysterious but harder-to-observe ways. Maybe the water dance is not only a way to produce infrasound; maybe it's also a signal. Scientists need to be choreographers and code-breakers as well as observers. Who can understand the subtle semaphore of a glance? In this pen full of males, the response to the water dance is instantaneous: many twitch to attention or shift their position. However, females read infrasound especially well, as if it were a billet-doux just for them, and they would by now be dashing toward these crooners. But whether they feel the sound, as vibrations that make their scales tingle and titillate their yen to mate, or hear the sound isn't fully understood yet, because no one has successfully tested their hearing in such low registers. Thus far, at least ten species of crocodilians are known to do the water dance, and it's always performed by the males; in fact, it's the only crocodilian behavior—other than that immediately involved in reproduction—that is mastered by only one sex. Some crocodiles use it by itself, without the flamboyant bellow, effervescing the water two or three times in a row. Male alligators never bellow without doing the water dance at a specific point in the general rhythm of their bellowing. They rear up, puff their throats, and drop down. Then they tense hard, like musclemen flexing, and the water droplets appear, to be immediately followed by bellowing. But in the so-called head-slap display, when they tilt their heads at about a thirty-five-degree angle to the water surface and then slap and splash the water noisily, they sometimes use the water dance and sometimes don't. Sometimes they water-dance before they head-slap, and sometimes they head-slap and water-dance at the same

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time. When they get truly inspired, and want the water to sizzle like frying bacon for perhaps twenty seconds, they can do a whole suite of water dances—as many as nine. This suggests that it's a separate behavioral act, which they can choose to use whenever they think it necessary in the private agenda of their lives.

After all the bellowing has stopped, I retrace my path to the lake and find Kent and the others in the water busy wrestling with a large lassoed male that has begun to hurl itself into tight spins. Its belly flashes a glossy pale yellow with each turn, and its neck scales look like large greenish curds. How can anything so heavy float?

"Did you see the water dance?" Kent asks, a little out of breath as he tries to maneuver the alligator into a position near the shore where it won't hurt itself or any of the handlers. Before I can answer, something alerts him, and he turns quickly and scans the opaque water behind him, which he seems to be sectioning with his eyes. It is like trying to look from one world into another, from life into death. No amount of urgent staring will make the water clear and the forces that lie beneath it visible. There are only hints and signs—a certain wavering of the current, a surface shimmer. People who walk in the woods come to know the signs that animals are close by, but water animals show signs of their presence, too. In the Amazon, I watched pods of pink dolphins arc across the river. Just before a dolphin surfaced for air, a narrow window would seem to shine on the water, bright and mirror-like, and then a dolphin would leap right through the window, making a small soughing sound as it inhaled and plunged back under. The dolphin windows were signs I grew to search for. Kent is reading the water for small whirlpools in the duckweed, signs of underwater motion, but this time it's a false alarm. We all decide to rest on the shady bank while the alligator quiets down.

The sounds of cows mooing and then of a big truck struggling to get out of a mudhole are, I know by now, really the bellowing of alligators. William Bartram once wrote that the bellowing "most resembles very heavy distant thunder, not only shaking the air and waters, but causing the earth to tremble; and when hundreds and thousands are roaring at the same time, you

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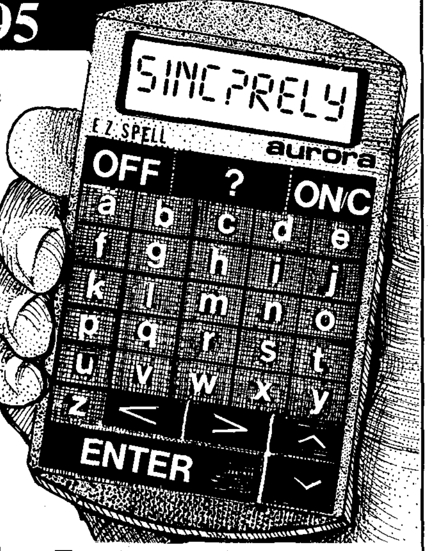
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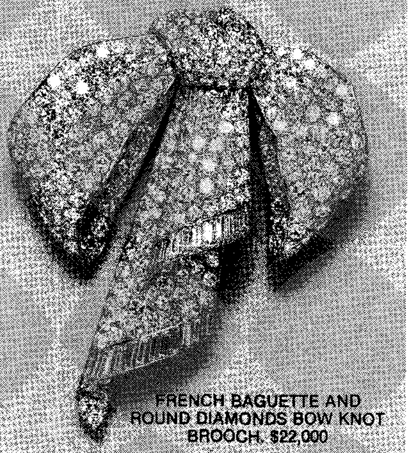

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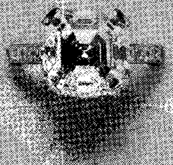

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can scarcely be persuaded, but that the whole globe is violently and dangerously agitated." Picture the swamps boiling up around thousands of bellowing alligators, each of them creating its own private water dance and all of them part of a dizzying group spectacle that must have driven the females wild.

"The water dance was fabulous," I say. "There should be a musical accompaniment. Well, I guess, in a sense, there is."

"You know, a lot of things can set an alligator bellowing," Lou says as he fusses with his now drenched bandage. "A biologist at the American Museum of Natural History once proved that they prefer B-flat."

"B-flat? On any special instrument?"

"Doesn't matter. You see, back in 1944 they had a big alligator named Oscar living in a tub in a lab, and he seemed to respond when they strummed steel rods at certain intervals but not at others. So one night when an orchestra was using the museum auditorium they asked a French-horn player to help them out with an experiment. He played a little, and whenever he hit B-flat Oscar went wild with bellowing. Then they tried a cello and the same thing happened. The instrument didn't matter—just the right pitch."

I remember Alan Hovhaness's "And God Created Great Whales," which includes the mournful ragas of humpback whales, those oceanic troubadours with a song in their bones. Has no composer, I wonder, written a composition in B-flat for alligator and orchestra?

Three herons swoop low over the water and disappear behind a tall stand of fig trees. A chilly breeze cuts through the glade. Sylvia hides her hands in her pockets, and I pull on a sweater. If we were alligators, we would find a patch of sunlight to bask in. When the sun comes up, they sprawl in its hypnotic warmth; when they get too hot, they slither into the shade. Maintaining the right temperature is crucial, so they must constantly ad-lib, and sometimes that makes them seem a little finicky: arranging the tail out of the water but the rest of the body in it, or just the head under water, or one leg and the tip of the nose in the sun and the rest of the body curved into the shade. A human equivalent would

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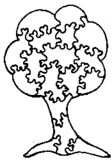

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be taking off one's cardigan but putting on a pair of socks and a hat.

"This must be a far cry from your boyhood in Oklahoma," I say to Kent.

"That's a fact," he says. "There's not much to do in Oklahoma. On a Friday night, we used to go out and find a pasture full of cows. We'd sneak in among them when they were asleep, and push them right over. You don't have to shove them too hard, and they fall." He makes a toppling motion with his hand. "You should see the look on their faces! They don't know what happened to them when they hit the ground. Cow tipping is what we called it."

At last, the alligator subsides a little. "Well, all right, let's have a go at him," Kent suggests, and we begin hauling it onto the shore, but every few feet it digs its toes into the mud and hauls back. For a tense moment, as my feet skid forward in the mud, there's some question in my mind about which of us is hauling whom where, and to what purpose. The alligator doesn't seem to be straining at all—just sitting in the shallow water and gently leaning back.

"Whatever you do, *don't lean forward*," John warns me. "Make sure that if you fall you can fall backward or to the side." As the rope cuts into our hands, I'm glad I brought a pair of heavy cowhide gloves along, even though I knew Kent was right when he had advised me, with characteristic understatement, that "a pair of gloves probably isn't much help against an alligator's teeth." For the moment, it is a standoff: three of us straining and sweating, the alligator hunkering down in the water, none of us advancing or retreating. You'd think the alligator would just attack us—or, at least, run forward with jaws open, growling and hissing in a grandstand bluff. We're puny compared with it. We can't outswim it or outmuscle it. However, we have on our side one powerful but unlikely weapon. Alligators seem to measure their prey by its height. To some crocodilians, a tall animal is a big animal, even if in reality it's only a lightly built child. Dogs, because of their low silhouettes, are frequently attacked and eaten, but alligators rarely attack people who are standing up. Alligators can change their height only by a few inches, and they have short legs. So if one is faced with an overzealous alligator the best thing to

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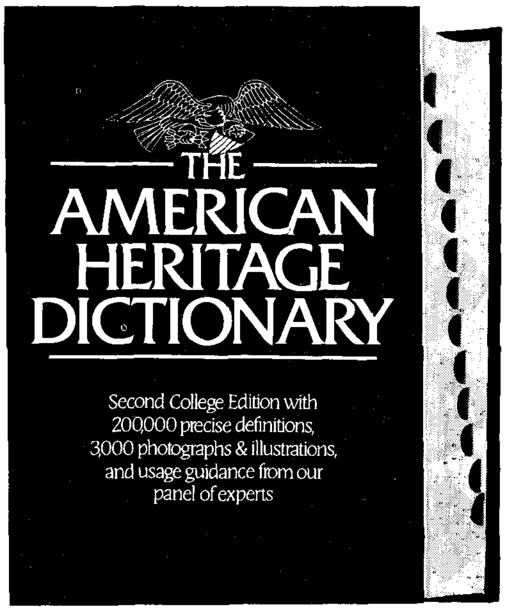
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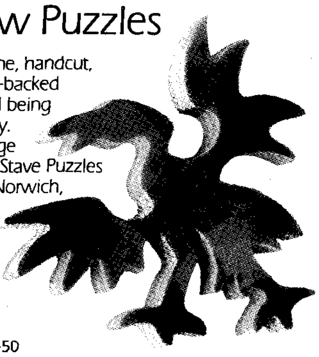

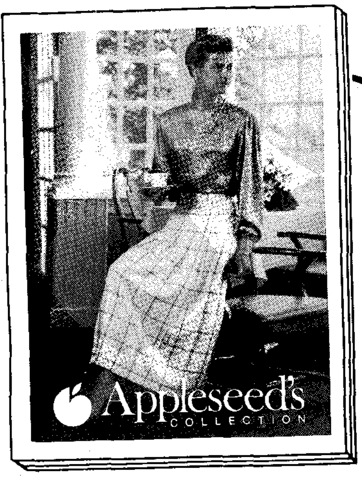

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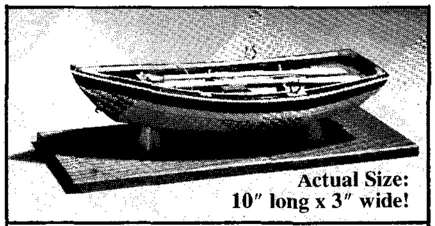

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do is to look as tall as possible. In shallow water, I would stand up and raise my hands above my head. Of course, the best plan is not to swim where crocodilians are known to travel, and not to lure crocodilians out of the water by feeding them marshmallows and other tidbits, as people in Florida and Georgia invariably do. Sooner or later, their "pet" alligator, which roams a nearby lake or canal, takes a white sneaker for a large marshmallow, or decides to bunk in the house, and there is instant turmoil.

At last, we drag the alligator partly onto the shore, and it walks the rest of the way up the bank as nonchalantly as a willful dachshund.

"Do you really think height matters much, when you're trying to discourage an alligator?" I ask Kent.

"Absolutely," he says. "Before I started swimming with them, I tried to work out a few safeguards in case I got into trouble. One was that I never swam in deep water. I always swam in water that was shallow enough so that if I stood up at least half my height showed, because I knew that would slow them down, if it didn't stop them. And it does work. I've never had an alligator go into a full charge at me. I've had alligators that were careering toward me, starting to go into a charge. I'd stand up and, boy, they'd just stop dead in their tracks."

"What does a charging alligator look like?" I ask. "The only ones I've seen have been in movies, and those charges have probably been staged."

"It's a phenomenon. A charging alligator is incredible. It starts by swimming fast, and then—as it builds up power, churning hard with its tail—its head starts rising up out of the water. And when it really goes it lunges out of the water—I mean, its entire head, shoulders, and about half its body come right out of the water—with its arms folded back and its mouth wide open, and it just growls and keeps coming on strong. Then it closes its mouth and dives, and hits what it's charging at down underwater, and drags it away."

"Wow," Debbie says—more an exhale than a comment.

"Why do they seem to be so crazy about dogs?" I ask.

Kent laughs. "They sure do seem to have a thing about dogs. They really love them. I used to think it was because dogs don't back down—

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they'll stand there and bark—but I've changed my mind. I think alligators just go after all small mammals, but they catch raccoons and possums at night when we're not around. And they may just like the taste of dogs."

"Will they stalk them? Will they stalk anything?"

"They're not great stalking animals, the way some crocodiles are. Some crocodiles are very good ambush predators."

"It's a funny idea, thinking of crocodiles waiting behind a bush."

"Well, they don't wait behind bushes. What crocodiles do is sit way out in the middle of the lake. If they see you on the shore, they'll submerge and swim all the way to you underwater and then just come charging onto the shore and take you out before you know what's happening. In fact, these guys that farm crocodiles have to watch the crocs continuously, because if one goes underwater you have to move up or down the shore fast—he's going to come charging out, and if you're still there you're in big trouble. Now, alligators can't do that. They just aren't built to do it. Occasionally, you'll see one try to do it. It will go underwater, but then you see it popping up in the wrong place. It gets lost, you know, and it kind of looks around and goes back down and tries it again. They just don't attack the way crocodiles do. Alligators are big crocodilians, but they're shy and retiring, very passive creatures. Even the largest males. Some crocodiles, on the other hand, are agile and mean and fast—super-predators that consider human beings prey items. Alligators just aren't like that. Most of them are real pussycats."

But *very large* ones, I think as we watch the antics of the huge alligator tethered a few yards from us. Nearby, a smaller alligator floats, with just its eyes, nose, and back showing, like a small archipelago. The alligator's sweet muskiness drifts through the air. Musk, a light molecule, which doesn't diffuse well, is easy to detect here at the farm, because we're so mobile: we can walk across the boardwalk, wade into the water, or perch on a bank. Surprised by the musk, I take a step into the subtle, lightly cloying aroma and right out of it again—all at once it has disappeared. One of the mysteries about alligator musk is whether its airborne component, which we smell, matters to alligators or is just an acci-

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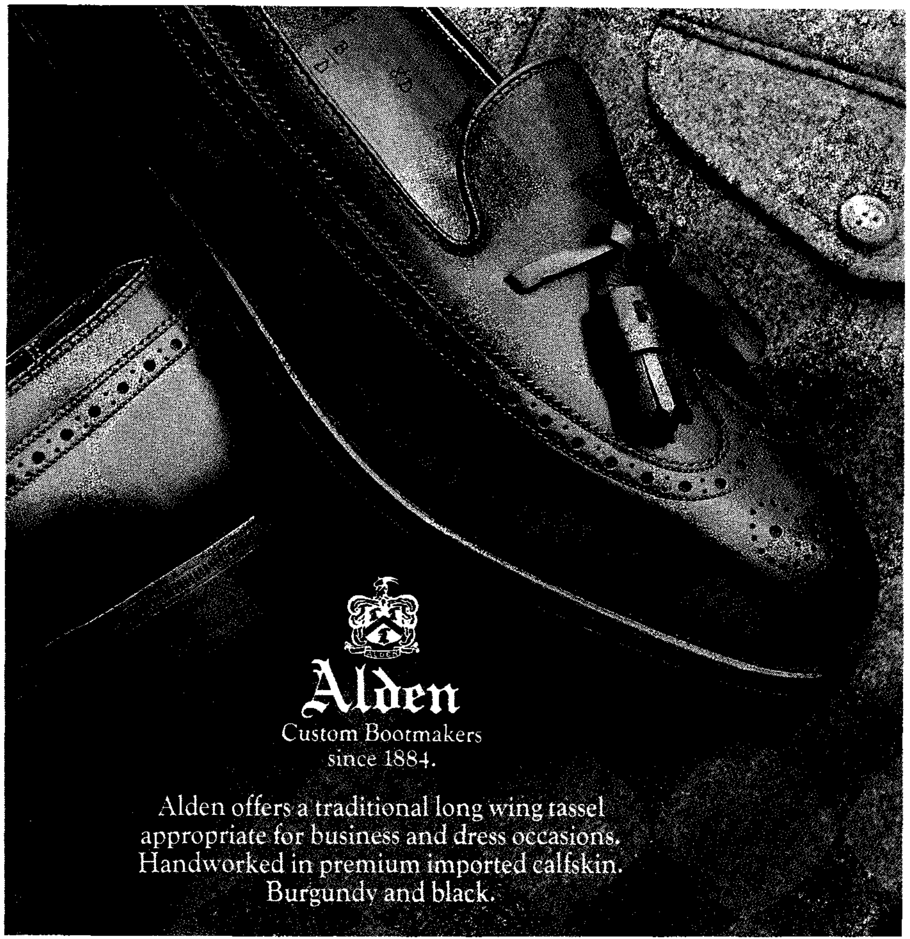

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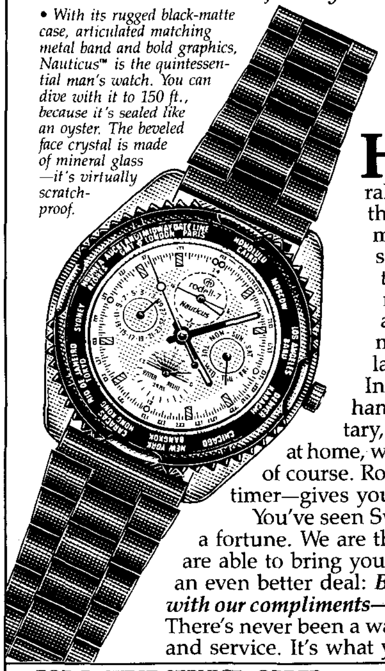

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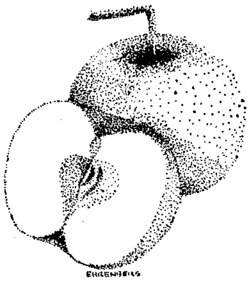
dental effect. The musk seems to travel mainly on the surface of the water, and makes an oily sheen, after bellowing, head-slapping, or other aggressive behavior. We smell its airborne molecules at five or six feet off the ground, and, from our tall bias, we imagine that alligators throw bouquets of scent into the air, when in truth they may just be painting their odor name and intention on the surface of the water, from which lightweight particles happen to rise and become the musk we smell. To truly understand the features of an alligator's life, we would need to perceive the world through an alligator's sense net, and here technology sometimes helps more than observation can. We know a lot about auditory and visual communication in animals, because hearing and seeing dominate our human world, but we know much less about animals' tactile, electrical, sonar, and olfactory communication, because those ways of sensing don't "make sense" to us as readily. But once you have seen a bat echolocate or watched an alligator touch distant pond-mates with its water dance your idea of seeing and touching changes.

By midafternoon, we've rounded up the last of our alligators, and feel about as bone-weary and nerve-rattled as we need to. Alligator handling is not so much a skill as a willingness, but it's not to be wasted; so, saying goodbye to Kent, I promise him that whenever I'm in the vicinity he can count on me to wade in and lend a hand. Many kinds of people end up handling crocodilians. Kent, a university-educated and trained zoologist, is one kind; the wild and woolly ex-poachers are another; the good old boys of the Louisiana bayous are still another; and then there are old-fashioned naturalists, like George Campbell, who has invited me to pay a call on him and his "treacherous" pet alligator, Spiro.

EARLY the next morning, I fly to Fort Myers to meet George, who is the head of the Southwest Florida Regional Alligator Association, and who, for many years, was called upon frequently to remove nuisance alligators from people's back yards and swimming pools, among other unwelcome spots. A tall, slender man with long white hair and a beard, translucent skin, and a gentle manner, he has loved crocodilians for most of his seventy years, and at one point he had the second-largest collection of crocodilians in the world—second only to that at the Berlin Zoo. What made this collection really unusual is that he had it in the basement of his house, in a suburb of Detroit. His son tells a wonderful story about his mother during those years. The family swore not to tell of their collection of crocodilians and other reptiles, because it was illegal to keep them in suburban Detroit. One day, his mother had her sewing group over, the ladies all plugged in their portable sewing machines, and suddenly thirty male crocodilians began to bellow from the basement. One of the machines must have hit a B-flat. She was nonplussed, but quickly collected herself, explained that the plumbing had been acting up for days, and told them to pay it no mind.

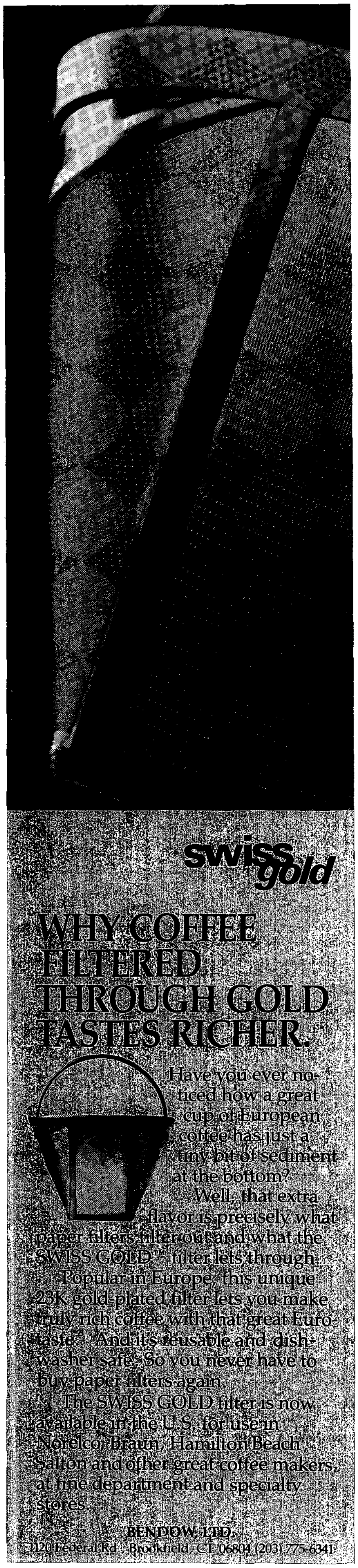


Now George has only one crocodilian left from his collection—Spiro, who is twenty-three years old and, George likes to say, "probably the only alligator born in Detroit since the Mesozoic Era." However, George and his friend Ann Winterbotham do have over two hundred animals living with them, either inside their houses or in various outbuildings, sheds, and enclosures on the surrounding four acres. Spiro lives in an outdoor pen with a big watering trough for soaking in and rocks for sunning on. Though he's small for his age—only about eight feet long—George tells me that he has "a very nasty disposition" and is "a better watchdog than a trained Doberman."

"What, exactly, is a *good* disposition in an alligator?" I ask.

"Well, not this," he says as he opens a gate in a tall fence and steps inside. Spiro, sunning himself on a rock, utters a loud hiss, snarls, turns toward us, and shifts his weight, ready to charge. George keeps a safe distance away and backs out as smoothly as possible. George went to college, but he learned about nature mainly by watching it. He has collected animals for the American Museum of Natural History; he started Trinidad's first zoo; he has worked in conservation for many years; he and Ann used to travel the world collecting animals (Ann once carried a snake into the country in her bra); and they still lead groups of people to the Galápagos, Kenya, and other faraway places. George and Ann collaborate on books, he writing about the animals and she drawing them. Together, they keep their own version of Noah's Ark. (Whenever possible, they acquire both the male and female of a species.) It would take pages to list all the animals they lovingly tend, so here are just a few of them: bush babies, living in cages in their living room (one sleeps in a big gym bag); marmosets; flying squirrels; goats; donkeys; dogs; cats; cockatiels, which have red Pagliacci rouge spots on their cheeks, and which Ann raises by hand and sells; a big apricot cockatoo, which allows you to stroke its sumptuous neck feathers; about seventy turtles, living in a special turtle area of the yard; two burros from Death Valley, who produced a baby last October; a family of Florida turkeys, big knobbly-faced creatures with orange tail feathers, speckled beaks, scarlet eruptions on their throats, big black tassels on their chests, and iridescent necks (their faces look like the linoleum of a cheap motel); a Costa Rican squirrel, which has a knitted blue hat to cuddle up in; male and female peafowl; an African puff adder; a Gaboon viper; two diamondbacks; a dozen albino corn snakes; a Mexican pink-kneed tarantula; a six-inch black scorpion; a South American lungfish; two hedgehogs; a flock of Gouldian finches with vibrant purple swaths across their chests; a red-chested parrot, which has a yellow belly and a blue-and-green head, and is a member of an endangered species; lovebirds; zebra finches; white-tufted sultan chickens; giant macaws; an African hornbill; and three mynah birds, one of which seems to live in a constant state of cajoling as it repeats, "Come on, come on. Hi, baby. Come on, come on."

In the kitchen of Ann's house hangs a plaque bearing an ancient Egyptian spell to drive off cockroaches. A five-foot plastic snake from Korea floats in a pool outside the living room's sliding-glass doors. Sassy, a green parrot who lives in a cage on the kitchen counter, keeps saying hello in various registers and with different intonations: "Hello. Hello! Hello?" A stone alligator basks on the patio. Animal carvings decorate the walls. Even the wind chimes are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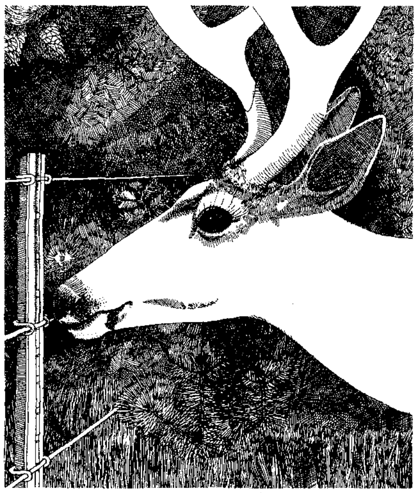

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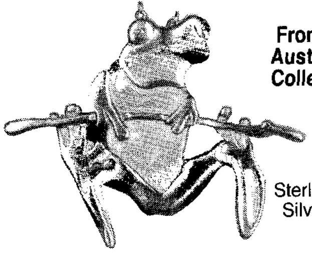

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animal-shaped. A spread of magazines on the living-room table runs a wide gamut from *Mother Jones* to *Science*. A van sits in the driveway. "SOME OF US AIN'T ON VACATION," a bumper sticker says.

Over dinner with George and Ann at Sonny's Bar-B-Q, nearby, I ask George about his collection of crocodilians.

"What kind of a house did you have in Detroit?"

"A red brick colonial, in the suburb of Grosse Pointe. I had more baths in my house than Henry Ford had in his. I put the baths down in the basement, and I put the whole thing together and plumbed it. I kept the animals in tanks, sinks, bathtubs—anything that would hold water."

"How many did you have there at once?"

"About forty. Well, you know, there are about two dozen species and subspecies of crocodilians in the world today. Over the years, I had all of them. I've had every living crocodilian in the world at one time or another."

"How could you tend them? How could you feed them? Did you have to change their water?"

"There was one important drain in the floor, and if that had ever got stuck I would have been in trouble."

"It was the second-largest collection in the world, I understand."

George sets his knife and fork down on a plate heaped with barbecued chicken and french fries. "There was a director of the Berlin Zoo, and he was the strangest man in the world," he says, and smiles hugely. "I guess *I* was the strangest man in the world—he was the next strangest. Anyway, we had a rivalry going. I was in international trade, so I roamed around the world a lot in those days. We still do—don't we, Ann? And this guy—he knew how many animals I had and I knew how many animals he had—would send me a cablegram saying, 'I've got a this-and-such and you haven't.' And then I'd catch up with him, and maybe get one ahead of him. Then I'd cable him. Well, I'd go see him in Berlin every once in a while. He lived in an upstairs apartment at the zoo. In Europe, zookeepers live on the property. The first time I went to see him, I walked into this strange apartment. On every lamp and all over the ceiling, above the doors, hanging on picture frames, curtains, and every-

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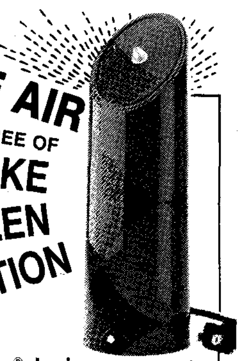

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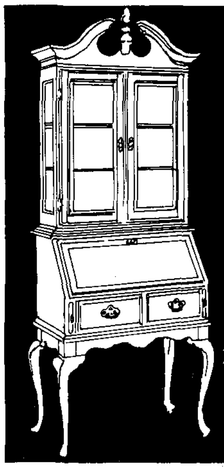

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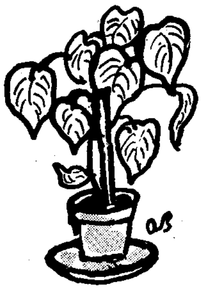
thing else, were witches, little doll witches. This guy was ape on witches. He had hundreds of them in his apartment. There was also a shrunken head. Dominating the apartment was a Ping-Pong table. So the first time I went to see him I said, 'Well, your collection looks great. I see you've finally got a so-and-so.' And he says, 'First we play.' I had to play the damn guy at Ping-Pong! He insisted on wearing me out with Ping-Pong before we could even talk about crocodiles. He never would talk about the witches hanging all over. Very strange man. They tell me he died in an institution not long ago. I think he should have been in an institution back then. Well, anyhow, he and I shared the distinction of having the greatest number of living crocodilians. Sometimes he was one species ahead of me, sometimes I was one ahead of him. This went on for several years."



"Where did you get your crocodilians?"

"Oh, they weren't hard to get in those days. It was perfectly legal, for example, if I was going through India, to pick up a gharial or a mugger, or, if I was going through the eastern part of Asia, to pick up Siamese crocs, which are now extinct in the wild, or salt-water crocs. They often had them in the marketplaces. I remember in Calcutta I found a wonderful crocodile in the Hogg Market."

"How did you get them home?"

"In my briefcase. They had to be small, you see. If I stopped here or there, I'd put them in the bidet or the bathtub overnight, and then if I had to stay around another day I'd put them back in the briefcase or suitcase and stash it someplace in the room, so the room attendant wouldn't be snooping around. I've done that with lots of animals, not only crocodilians. Spiro is all that is left of the greatest-but-one crocodilian collection, but to have had that collection was a kind of triumph."

"What happened to your collection?"

"What finally did it in was the growth of many of the crocodiles. Some grew so fast as to be dangerous. When a big Nile crocodile almost twisted my arm off, I figured I had had enough, and sold the collection to Ross Allen, who had a big farm here in Florida."

Because we are planning a drive to Lester Piper's Everglades Wonder Gardens, a roadside zoo and alligator farm, in Bonita Springs, tomorrow morning, we head back to the compound and call it a day. What with the raucous clamor of the bush babies, the chitchat of the parrots, and then the roosters crowing at first light, it's hard to sleep. In the morning, I stumble into Ann's kitchen for organic granola and coffee. Sassy, the parrot, greets me by loudly screech-singing "La Cucaracha." When she gets to the second verse, she goes into a falsetto "la . . . la-la-la-la-la-la." The air, full of the combined aromas of different animals, seems thick and sweet, like the inside of a circus tent.

Ann, a petite athletic-looking woman in her seventies, appears, in a pair of jeans and a white shirt. Her hair is neatly combed, and she looks rested and ready for the day, which will begin, as each day does, with the feeding of the two hundred animals. It takes about an hour, and must be repeated at night. And then, of course, there are the nocturnal animals, which are on a different feeding schedule.

"Don't you ever find looking after so many animals a burden?" I ask.

"Oh, no," she says as she cuts up oranges and other fruit, and prepares eggshells, bought feed, and various tidbits. "It's wonderful waking up in this house. The bush baby in the first cage there is particularly glad to see me, because he's my special pet. He wants to hold my hand, he holds my fingers, he wants to be petted, and I give him something to eat. And then Sassy sings to us, the same way she sang to you a moment ago. Cyrano—he's another parrot—says 'Hello,' and he'll say, in various tones, 'I love you, I love you, I love you.' Animals give you a lot of love. Not many people have that sort of beginning to a day."

George strolls in, wearing a well-worn bush hat that snaps up on either side, and sets to work on the morning's chores, which he and Ann split. Around noon, we arrive at Lester Piper's Everglades Wonder Gardens, and help ourselves to tangerines and carambolas, fresh from Lester's trees, which he offers people free as they

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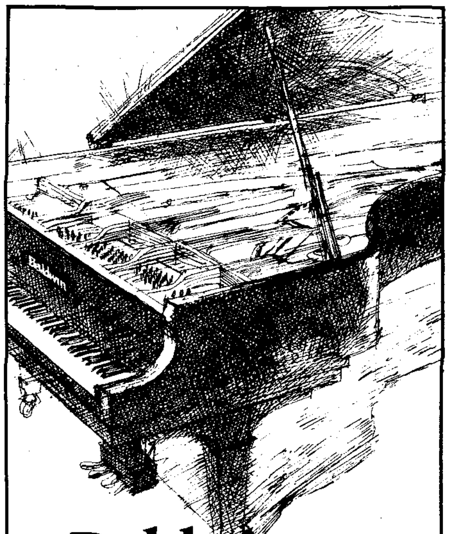
enter. In his eighties now, a little deaf, and somewhat grizzled-looking, Lester comes out and greets George warmly. They are old friends, with a common lifelong crocodilian passion. Lester came to Florida, from Detroit, in the thirties, and began buying up every square mile of land he could for pennies an acre. Though he is reputed to be worth millions, and owns large parcels of Florida real estate, he keeps the alligator farm, his favorite venture, in fine shape, with the help of two grandsons. For one thing, Lester owns almost all of Florida's American crocodiles in captivity. Through overhunting and the disappearance of their habitats for shopping malls, golf courses, and other forms of progress, they've become nearly extinct in the wild, American has-beens. But Lester keeps a large shallow-water enclosure full of them. Strolling through lush tropical landscaping, which includes forty-foot cacti, carambola trees, spiky-barked kapok trees, fig trees, and other exotics, along with Spanish moss, we pass cages of panthers, vultures, roseate spoonbills clattering their platelike beaks, and other animals that would be more at home on the Orinoco.

"Well, look at this," George says. "Assassin's delight." At one side of the crocodile enclosure, a giant overhanging tree offers long upside-down pink flowers, whose throats are fleshy pastels. "Angel's-trumpet. *Very* poisonous. And just a little taste of it would send you into a dreamlike stupor. Look, some of the flowers have fallen into the water."

I look down at the crocodiles: long triangular snouts, fixed smiles, a dreamy languor. Coastal South Florida used to be full of them. Now they are reduced to this, a concrete fortress at a roadside show, and they are lucky to have it. Most of them look remarkably healthy. Full-bodied, with fleshed-out limbs, they have shiny, clean feet with all the digits and no encrustations; their eyes look intact, and their tails are pointed (not blunted in fights). They lie on top of one another like rounds of pastrami, occasionally shifting their weight or lifting a tail or a leg into the sun. As we drift through the grounds, we come to a small enclosure filled with American alligators. One presses up on its toes and does a high walk.

"Looks like someone's idea of a coffee table, doesn't it?" Ann says. "You know, I saw one in Texas climb a



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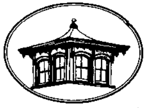

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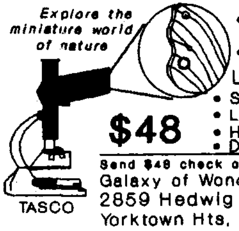
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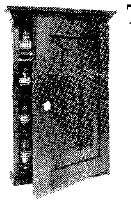

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nine-foot chain-link fence. A woman I knew used to go out to the water behind her house, lure it out onto the land, and feed it big slabs of bacon. One day, all on its own, it just climbed over the fence and went right into her yard. They finally had to put barbed wire on top of the fence."

How do you call an alligator? "Hey, alligator!" a young woman yells across the pen. This is incorrect. George and I glance at one another with a shared secret. Our eyes quietly converse: "Do you want to do it?" "No, you do it." He leans toward the alligators and whine-grunts, "Umph, umph, umph," in a pitch that swoops from high to low, with lips closed and throat warbling. Half the alligators turn and look at him; some grow tense and ready. One leaves its basking rock and slides into the water. "Umph, umph, umph," George repeats, and the gator swims up close at speed, eying us fiercely. There are as many variations on the best way to call an alligator as there are alligator hunters. Some callers say they have the most luck by holding their lips closed and oinking. I once heard a famous Amazon guide named Moacir Fortes call caimans with a closed-mouthed strident grunt a little more tubalike than George's call. Crocodilians make a variety of sounds, depending on the season and their mood, and callers mimic those different sounds. But most callers have one thing in common: they are attempting to imitate the distress call of a baby alligator. Hatchlings make a characteristic sound, which tells the mother alligators that they're ready to head for open water or, if they're already in the water, that they're in danger and need help. Adult crocodilians will home in on the anguished cries of the young, and fight to protect them. The adolescence of an alligator happens when it passes from giving distress calls to responding to them, and trades the helplessness of the baby for the gladiatorial weapons of the adult. Distress is the bugle call of alligators' lives. Some people assume, because reptiles are so low on the evolutionary ladder, that they don't look out for their young, but alligators are diabolically protective. To save their young, *they* would slay dragons.

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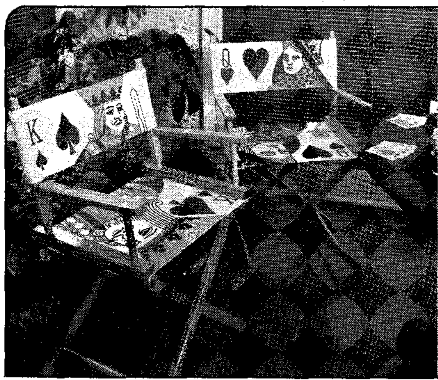

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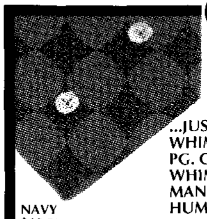

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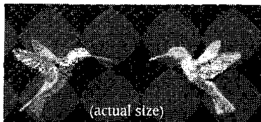

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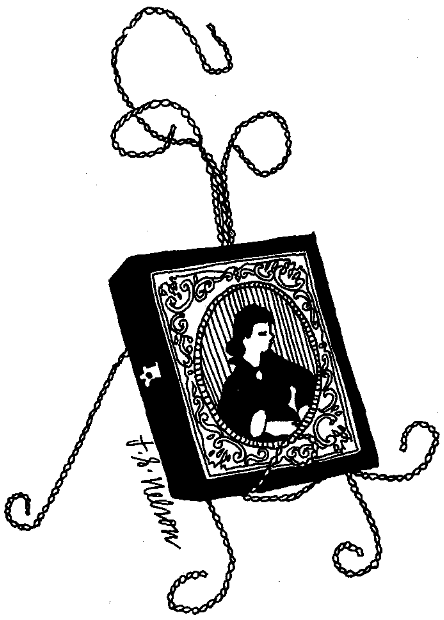
out-of-the-way places, like swamps, and are terribly shy. But enough observers have now seen females with their young, and filmed them as well, to leave no doubt about their tenderness.

Mother alligators lay eggs in mound nests, which they build of mud, twigs, and whatever else they can find. Squatting over the nest to deposit thirty-five or so porcelainlike eggs, the mother sometimes holds one foot underneath her to break the eggs' fall a little. Then she stands guard, to keep intruders from the nest. The average incubation time is sixty-five days. A strange fact about crocodilian babies is that they don't have sex chromosomes. We human beings have forty-six chromosomes—twenty-two pairs of autosomal chromosomes and one pair of sex chromosomes—but a baby alligator's sex is determined by the temperature at which the eggs develop. Two or three weeks after a crocodilian egg has been laid, the mechanisms that will cause a male or a female to develop turn on, cued to the temperature of the nest area: ninety-four degrees Fahrenheit or higher produces males; eighty-six degrees Fahrenheit or lower produces females. Most often, one finds an entire nest of one sex or the other—just clutches of male or female eggs. Or the entire nest may be female except for the top two or three eggs, because heat rises to the top of the egg chamber and concentrates there. Many factors make up the ultimate equation that produces male or female offspring: where the mother chooses to build the nest; where she decides to lay her eggs within the nest. She may put her nest in the shade or in the sun or in equal amounts of sun and shade. It may be that the environment, the ambient air temperature alone, determines which sex will be born, or it may be that she chooses in some way. The female may somehow assess the population ratio in deciding where to put her nest: "There certainly are a lot of males around. I think I'll lay a cool nest, and produce some females." At the moment, no one knows. Much is known about crocodilians' response to temperature, however. If you incubate a crocodilian's eggs in a cool place, the offspring will seek to live in cooler temperatures later on. Lighter-colored hatchlings emerge from cooler eggs, darker-colored hatchlings from warmer eggs.

A baby alligator has a sharp tooth to slit the shell membrane, and then it presses with its head to break the shell, but sometimes the mother, hearing its calls, comes, lifts the egg in her mouth, and cracks the shell by pressing it between her tongue and her palate, gently enough not to injure the baby inside. Just imagine the precision and control it takes for her to pick up the egg in her huge jaws and crunch down delicately enough to free her infant without hurting it. Sooner or later, she leads the babies down to the water, or she may carry them there, a few at a time, in her open mouth. It's quite a thrill to see a mother alligator ambling down to the shore with a squirmy hatchling or two in her jaws. As soon as they're in the water, they swim around her, and crawl up onto her head and back to sun and rest themselves, or they may trail along behind her like a brood of ducklings. Fussing with them and nuzzling them, she keeps them close while they learn to feed on insects and small fry.

Sometimes a male and a female will work together to guard a nest through the gestation period. One can see baby alligators sitting on the head of a giant male that is a holy terror to every other animal in the vicinity. Alligators have a whole series of vocalizations between male and female, female and offspring, and offspring and adults. The young are playful. Alligators are oddly similar to birds: they build nests, they indulge in intense parental care, and they call to their mates and their young. If they don't have songs per se, they do have tuneful and yearning outcries.

The first couple of years of life are especially tough for alligators. Yearlings are only about a foot and a half long, and three-quarters of them die, because so many animals—fish, frogs, turtles, wading birds—eat little alligators. Once they get a bit bigger, they don't have that problem, but then they have to start worrying about the adults. When the young are two or three years old, adults start chasing them around, driving them off to fend for themselves. A three-year-old alligator may be three and a half feet long when it begins its wandering. Sometimes people see such alligators on roads and in ditches. When they grow to six feet, they have reached reproductive size. In most reptiles, and especially in crocodilians, puberty depends on size, not age. In the wild, alligators start reproducing at nine or ten, though in northern populations (the Carolinas) puberty may begin as late as fifteen years old for males, and females may be around eighteen before they start to breed. Past fifty, a male alligator in the wild may grow feeble, not replace its fallen teeth, develop mottled, rough skin, even go blind. But some well-fed crocodilians in captivity are thought to have lived as long as ninety years.



In the wild, all crocodilians eat every living thing their jaws can catch, from fish and insects, when they're young, to turtles, dogs, and other small animals. Like their relatives the birds, they swallow what are called gastroliths—a kind of millstone to aid digestion. Usually, these are stones, but they can be pieces of metal or wood. Dinosaur skeletons have been found with similar gastroliths. Once, at a meeting of the Zoological Society of London, a game warden from Tanganyika displayed the stomach contents of a Nile crocodile he had killed: "three coiled wire armlets, eleven heavy brass arm rings, a necklace of glass beads, fourteen leg and arm bones from various animals, three spinal columns, several porcupine quills, and eighteen stones of various sizes." In 1950, when the Cincinnati Zoo's prize crocodile, Marc Antony, swallowed a Coke bottle, the zoo vet operated, and found in its stomach six more bottles, some marbles, bullets of various calibres, a porcelain elephant, and thirty-nine stones.

"George, what's the strangest thing you've ever heard of anyone finding in a crocodilian's stomach?" I ask.

George scratches his beard and

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thinks a moment. "Well, I know of one animal that died of starvation after eating a plastic-foam pillow that filled its entire stomach."

"Do you think you'll ever collect so many crocodilians again?" I ask.

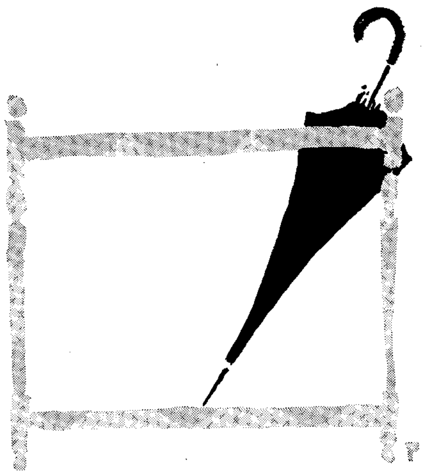
"No," he says as he looks longingly at Lester Piper's collection of American crocodiles, which we have returned to. "Now I collect other—well, more manageable—animals. In fact, we've got a pair of miniature horses arriving real soon."

"Don't let them kick you in the knees," I say as we help ourselves to more of Lester's sweet yellow carambolas.

BACK in Gainesville, I check into a hotel on Biven's Arm, a large lake that is connected to Paynes Prairie. In Florida, prairies are marshes—flooded grasslands—and Paynes Prairie is a state preserve, seven miles long and two miles wide. A prairie is a wonderful place for alligators, and they're regularly seen moving back and forth between Biven's Arm and Paynes. I am eager to see them in the wild, going about their business. I've heard that many nuisance alligators have been set free in the lake by officials at one time or another. Mats of vegetation float close to the shore. Small gators would love to climb up on them and sun themselves, but this early in the year they are elsewhere—in deeper water, which holds its warmth longer. At twilight, I walk along the swampy lakeshore. Towering oaks, reaching out over the water, drip Spanish moss from their branches. Tall grasses make perfect nesting sites for birds and also perfect hiding places for alligators, so I hold a flashlight up against my forehead and shine its beam along the shore, but I see nothing unusual—no laser-red eyes. In the darkness, it's especially easy to leave the present time and place behind, as if it were nothing more than a sandy dune, and I try to imagine what things must have been like in the days of Augustus, when, Pliny records, gladiators once slaughtered thirty-six crocodiles for the amusement of the Emperor. Herodotus chronicles the Egyptians' passion for the Nile crocodile and describes the sacred crocodile cult: "Each person has a tame crocodile; he puts pendants of glass and gold in its ear lids, and gives it a regular allowance of food daily. When it dies it is embalmed, and placed in a sacred repository." Archeologists found hundreds of mummified crocodiles in the tombs at Thebes. But it was in the city of Crocodilopolis that the cult reached its glory: priests worshipped a live crocodile god, and fed it mulled wine, roasted meat, and cakes.

There are still strong crocodile cults in some parts of the world. To the people of the Sepik River, in Papua New Guinea, the gigantic saltwater crocodile is an ever-present danger that they both fear and worship. In their mythology, a giant crocodile swam to the surface of the sea with the earth on its back and continues to hold it there, above the sea. Meticulously carved life-size crocodile heads decorate the prows of the canoes, which support their passengers the same way the crocodile supports the earth. When an elder of a Papua New Guinea community dies, his kinsmen cremate him, take some of his long bones, wrap them in the skin of a small animal, go in search of a crocodile, and, when they find one, persuade it to eat the bones. At the moment when the bones enter the body of the crocodile, the soul of the person enters, too. From then on, the crocodile will carry the soul on all its journeys, protecting it. If the kinsmen were to kill the crocodile, they would be killing the soul of their elder, who, along with their other ancestors, roams the world protected by tooth and claw.

In the morning, I sit on my balcony, a few yards from the water, and watch fog roll across the lake like the head on a glass of lager and then lift with the first hint of the day's heat. Alligators can live in unusual places if they have to. In theory, they could indeed live for a limited time in the sewers of New York; it's warm enough, and there are rats to eat, and they don't need the sun all year. In 1935, a seven-foot alligator was found in a sewer on East 123rd Street, and there have been various other sightings reported. But alligators couldn't survive there long—only a few months at the most—because they'd need sunlight eventually, and because salmonella or shigella or *E. coli*, organisms that one usually finds in sewage, would sooner or later poison them. Also, alligators live at temperatures between seventy-eight and ninety degrees, and caimans need temperatures between eighty-four and a hundred, so if an animal was flushed or dumped into the sewer it might survive the spring, summer, and fall, but winter's cold would kill it. Sewers would do in a pinch, but alligators have preferred landscapes, and this lake is a perfect habitat for them in the right season, no doubt about it.



In the distance, a flock of gulls floating on the water looks like the pieces of a torn-up letter. On a nearby tree limb, an anhinga spreads its wings and stiffly arches them forward, as if it were conducting an orchestra. Anhingas go into the water to stalk prey, and I can see one close to the shore with just its snaky neck and beak sticking up. A cormorant poses on a live-oak branch with its big black wings outstretched. When it turns its neck sidewise, it looks like the Prussian coat of arms. A gallinule with a long scarlet stripe down its nose hops among the shore grasses. Any one of these birds would be a tasty morsel for an alligator. Lifting my binoculars, I search the water for a > that might be a gator's wake. Then I search the banks, where a gator just might be basking. A small rip in the surface of the water turns out to be only a leaf. Great flocks of white egrets twirl slowly, like parasols, overhead. A reflection of clouds passing over seems to still the water, as if someone were smoothing out a rumpled fabric, and I seize the chance to scout the surface more carefully. A great blue heron floating near the shore starts to flap, drags its feet in the water for four touches, then finally takes flight. It is a scene of gator-perfect serenity, but with no gators. As the day warms up, birds perch on five fishermen's stanchions leading from the shore into deep water. The mats of vegetation float together and drift apart. The water begins to glitter like a marquee. One small mat suddenly turns on edge, and I see three connected pads reel into focus: an alligator—the nose, the head, the back! Sharp scutes lead from the forehead to dark eyes ringed in yellow and a plump, round nose. Arching its back, the alligator becomes a gently sloping pyramid, a symmetrical line from tail to snout. Sometimes it just hangs in the water, with only its nose and eyes showing. Not more than twenty yards from me, it cruises back and forth parallel to the shore, which it seems to be watching. Then, like a floating compass, it turns and points—first south, toward a Chinese restaurant overlooking the lake, and then east, toward me. My skin crawls with wonder. I must have earned some Brownie points in Heaven to be allowed a vision as rare as this. Is it male or female? And what is it doing up on the surface so early in the year? Without warning, it turns sharply and heads for deeper water, probably to find a warm spot on the bottom again and wait suspended for the powwows of spring. Then, along with the other alligators, it will pop to the surface again, with four or five inches of mud caked all over its head, and sit for a while in a sort of daze, until the world adds up and it's time to eat and bask and look for a mate. By now, the alligator is only a small wake in the distance, swimming straight on toward the far shore, where there are no houses or roads—only moss-drenched trees and the inviting darkness of a forest remote and untravelled.

"See ya' later," I call.

—Diane Ackerman

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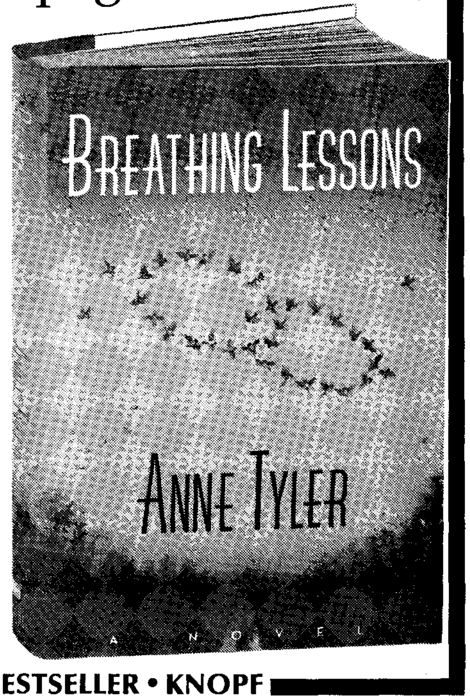

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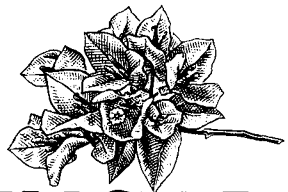

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MUSICAL EVENTS

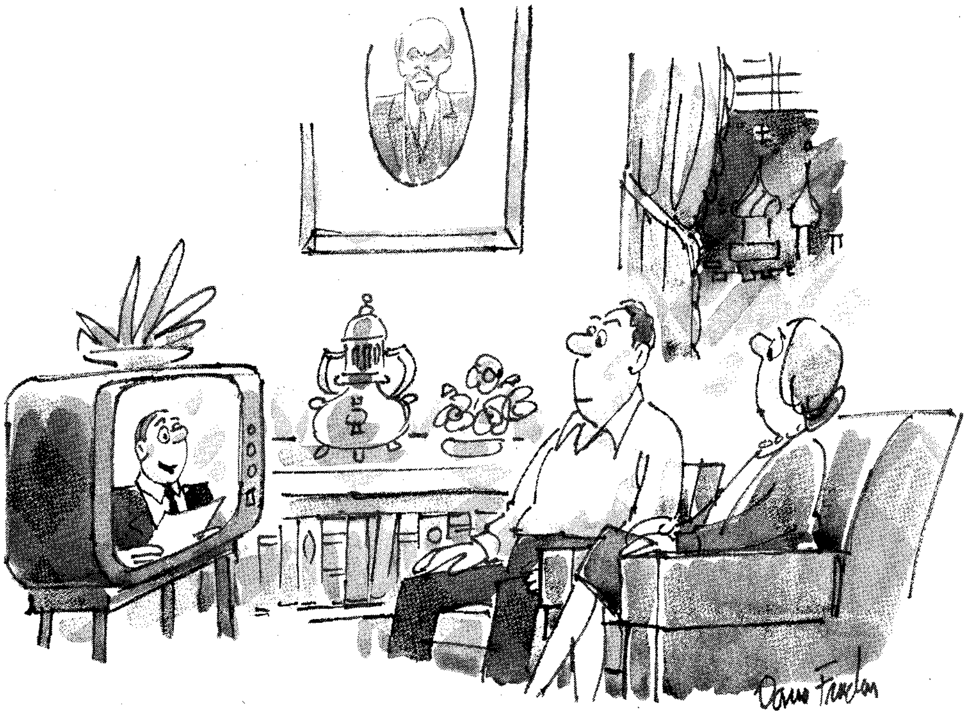
Santa Fe

THE Met since Gatti-Casazza's day and the City Opera since Julius Rudel's have abandoned any serious attempt to keep their audiences in touch with the international world of opera. The Santa Fe Opera, on the other hand, has a fine record. Among American premières it has given are those of Berio's "Opera," Britten's "Owen Wingrave," Henze's "The Stag King," "The Bassarids," "We Come to the River," and "The English Cat," Penderecki's "The Devils of Loudun," and Aulis Sallinen's "The King Goes Forth to France." For next year, Judith Weir's "A Night at the Chinese Opera" is announced. The new opera this year was Penderecki's "Die Schwarze Maske," which was first seen at the Salzburg Festival two years ago. This, however, was a curious choice: the opera excited no wide admiration at its première, and the Santa Fe presentation revealed no previously unsuspected merits.

Penderecki's first opera, "The Devils" (1969), after Aldous Huxley, was a sensational, theatrically effective, indecent work, with music designed to heighten scenes of sexual hysteria and prolonged torture. His second, "Paradise Lost" (1978), was a plodding, earnestly portentous, musically hollow reduction of Milton's epic. "The Black Mask" has a text, by the composer and Harry Kupfer, abridged and adapted from Gerhart Hauptmann's 1929 play of the same title. It is one of Hauptmann's realist-Expressionist dramas. The date is 1662 (described in the libretto as "just after the Thirty Years' War"). The scene is the hall of a Silesian house part Romanesque, part Gothic, part Renaissance; though it has been richly decorated by its present owners—Mayor Schuller and his wife, the wealthy Dutch widow Benigna—it remains gloomy. The drama is a descendant of such things as Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death" and Pushkin's "A Feast in the Time of Plague," with elaborations. The confusingly large company includes an Abbot, a Pastor, a Count, a Jewish merchant, an organist, Benigna's mulatto "niece," Jansenist and Huguenot servants, a pretty maid who is Schuller's mistress, and several others—a set of types rather than of individuals. Mystery mingles with naturalism: the house is invaded by strange sounds, by a troupe of sinister maskers, by the plague, and by Johnson—"a handsome, Herculean black man . . . with a noble, European-looking head," a Mandingo figure to whom, it transpires, Benigna has from the age of fifteen been in sexual thrall. The "niece" is their daughter. He pushed Benigna into her first marriage, to a kindly old Dutchman, an immensely rich slave trader, and then murdered him. Now the ferocious Johnson has followed Benigna and her second husband into Silesia. Tangled with all this is an acrimonious land dispute between the Abbot and the Count; and to both claimants Benigna has granted her favors, while withholding them from Schuller. People depart or die. At the close of the play, Schuller remains alone with his mistress. At the close of the opera, the muddle of action is swallowed up by an offstage Dies Irae, densely and noisily accompanied, which ends with a crashing twelve-note chord; no stage action is specified.

In Salzburg, Mr. Kupfer (whom Penderecki chose as co-librettist and director of the work after seeing his "Flying Dutchman" at Bayreuth) swung a giant mirror around so that during the Dies Irae it reflected the audience. In the Santa Fe production, which was directed by Alfred Kirchner (of the Vienna Burgtheater), the Jewish merchant and the mulatto girl picked their way past corpses out into the world of the living. Exactly what happens hardly seems important. There is a general sense of corruption—commerce in human flesh, whether of slaves or of women—pervading every aspect of high civilization while, outside, people suffer and starve. Evils have come home to roost. But the details are elliptical, enigmatic—and even more so in the opera, with its abridged text, than in the play. Menace, the plague, and blackness seem unpleasingly identified.

Penderecki has seized on musical cues in the play: a carillon that clangs out "Aus tiefer Not," chorale tunes sung by the Jansenist retainer. The offstage harpsichord of the original becomes a clamorous grand organ (and so the Abbot's remark that the instrument has been moved from the hall into an adjacent room now sounds strange). Snatches of period-pastiche dance music are heard from upstairs. The culminatory Dies Irae is several times adumbrated by an invisible alto voice and chorus. In this synthetic score the composer brings together his early, dissonant manners—clusters, block glis-



"Good evening, this is Georgi Avelov, your anchorcomrade."

sandos, pileups—and his later, fashion-following romantic manners. A small backstage wind orchestra, answering the big pit orchestra, lends depth to the sonic perspective and increases the mood of mystery. All is cleverly planned for success. The ingredients—sex, religion, Grand Guignol, facile social commentary—are carefully measured and cunningly blended. The result is lifeless: a cold-blooded, rebarbative exercise in operamaking.

To the role of Benigna, Beverly Morgan brought a bright but somewhat generalized intensity and agitation. Dennis Bailey was the Schuller, and many of his words were audible. (The opera was sung in an English translation commissioned by Santa Fe from Michael Feingold.) So were the words of James Ramlet, as the Pastor. Not many others. George Manahan conducted.

JOHN CROSBY, the general director of the company, has long championed Richard Strauss. All of Strauss's fifteen operas except "Guntram" and "Die Frau Ohne Schatten" have now been done at Santa Fe. This year, "Feuersnot" (1901), Strauss's second opera, and "Friedenstag" (1938), his twelfth, were played on a double bill. "Feuersnot" is an extended, self-justificatory jest at the expense of tradition-ridden Munich burghers (who had scorned Strauss's first opera, "Guntram"). "In legendary times," their ancestors jeer at a gifted though unconventional young hero; he turns the tables on them and—lengthily but lyrically—lectures them. The piece has pretty things in it, and the scoring is masterly—the great symphonic poems had already been composed—but it does not travel well. In Santa Fe, Mildred Tyree was a strained and out-of-tune heroine, Brent Ellis a valiant hero. The general effect was heavy and charmless.

"Friedenstag," however, is a noble opera—and a surprising one to have appeared in Munich in 1938 and been taken up in Dresden, Berlin, and Vienna. The librettist was in effect Stefan Zweig—an exiled Jewish author—even though Joseph Gregor, working closely to Strauss's and Zweig's prescriptions, wrote the final text and set his name to it. And the subject is pacificism: the capitulation of a stern military commander—prepared to blow up his fortress and all in it rather than surrender—to ideas of peace and brotherhood. It is the last day of the Thirty Years' War—October 24, 1648—and at the close of the opera Peace Day is hailed in a C-major blaze of orchestral and choral splendor. The commandant and the officer who commands his former foes join their voices: "Strife, the destroyer, Yields him to brotherly love! . . . Triumph won!" (in the words of Richard Capell's English translation). The soprano of the commandant's wife rings out over the ensemble: "Sun, shine forth, Eternal and holy! What has begun May God render perfect! Love shall embrace us And hatred be vanquished." The walls of the fortress split apart not in destruction but to reveal "brilliant sunlight on a sea of humanity." There is nothing quite like this elsewhere in Strauss's works.

Göran Järvefelt's stage direction, inept in "Feuersnot," was blunt but passable in "Friedenstag." Mr. Crosby's conducting of "Friedenstag" was warm, dedicated, and communicative. Michael Devlin was an eloquent commandant. The commandant's wife was sung by Alessandra Marc, a large woman with a large, radiant soprano; sometimes she pushed too hard on the big high notes. The smaller roles were well taken. As the private, Michael Forest, one of the Santa Fe apprentices (that nursery from which many fine singers have emerged), deployed a forward, shining young tenor.

THE other operas were "Die Fledermaus," "Così Fan Tutte," and "The Flying Dutchman." James Morris sang the Dutchman in magnificently full, dark, powerful tones, but a foolish production gave him small chance to be impressive. Nikolaus Lehnhoff, the director, and John Conklin, the designer, had set the opera in an attic storeroom. During the overture, the Dutchman prowled it, pulling off dust sheets, until he came upon an armchair and sat down. A good while later, when the proper time came for his entrance—one of Wagner's grandly theatrical entrances—he raised his head and sang from the chair. And so on. A drama usually surefire was damped. Marilyn Zschau sang Senta with serious intent but hit patches of vocal stridency. Mark Baker, a promising tenor, sang Erik's lyrical music in too beefy a manner. Edo de Waart was an unexciting conductor.

—ANDREW PORTER

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THE THEATRE

Mr. Robeson and Mr. Brooks

PHILLIP HAYES DEAN's biographical drama "Paul Robeson" seems to have mysteriously strengthened in the ten years since it was first done here, although the script is unchanged. Now in revival at the John Golden, under Harold Scott's impeccable direction, after a brief run Off Off Broadway, it opens on a stage unadorned except for a grand piano at center, a bust of Robeson on a pedestal, and some chairs. Ernie Scott quietly comes in and sits at the piano as Robeson is heard singing "This Little Light of Mine" and then speaking, over a microphone, to an audience that has assembled at Carnegie Hall to honor him at an occasion he is too old and too ill to attend. Enter Avery Brooks, in the title role, who tells us that he just can't make it to Carnegie Hall, sings "Deep River," and mockingly strikes a couple of heroic poses. This short scene establishes the character in its power—moral and physical—and its irony and humor. Mr. Brooks's performance goes beyond imitation—he seems possessed by Robeson, yet always in control. When he sings, which he does well, he captures Robeson's tone, thus refreshing our memory of Robeson—or the memory of those of us who were lucky enough to see him—but never interfering with it or blurring it. In the few snatches of "Othello" scattered here and there, Mr. Brooks is better than Mr. Robeson was.

Mr. Brooks is the sole actor present, although Ernie Scott, the pianist, does have some dialogue and a few songs (among them "Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out" as it should be done), and he is more than an accompanist; he is integral. The play is a matter of brief encounters through the years. Mr. Dean skillfully populates the stage with dozens of invisible men and women, among them passengers in a trolley car taking Robeson to Rutgers, the Rutgers dean and various arrogant or insulting members of the faculty and student body, and the coach of the football team. Later, there are Robeson's father and brothers, whom he loved; the Columbia Law School and faculty guests at one of Carl Van Vechten's parties; Robeson's adored wife, Essie; Eugene O'Neill, who hired Robeson to replace Charles Gilpin in "The Emperor Jones;" and Jerome Kern in London, with "Showboat." The triumph lasts well into the second act as he visits with aristocratic hostesses, Republican diplomats, and intellectuals. Then he tours grim Berlin, in the thirties, and Russia, where the enthusiasm of the people for him and his enthusiasm for them and their way of life propel him into politics. Triumph over. I must say that I found the latter part of the play even more depressing now than I did the first time; scenes of the House Un-American Activities Committee, discussions of cancelled passports, and a near-lynching in Peekskill become all but unbearable in retrospect. How did we live through those years?

I forgot to mention that Mr. Brooks is a sharp and funny mimic of the nobs and snobs Robeson ran into; Paul Robeson was a giant, and Mr. Brooks is not (except in our imaginations), and yet he is able at times to achieve a startling resemblance. The effective setting was designed by Michael Massee and lighted by Shirley Prendergast.

"THE humorist as comedian?" might run through your head when you're on the way to "Calvin Trillin's Uncle Sam," at the American Place. Not a bit of it; Mr. Trillin is the humorist as humorist. His tone is conversational and deadpan, and there is an underpinning of true satire to his lighthearted routines and jokes, with never a dud among them. Food and Mr. Trillin's family, here and in Kansas City; this city and its citizens and mayor; Texans on skis; and Reagan and his associates and the forthcoming election are among the subjects under consideration. He is best of all, I think, on his Jewish family back home, who came to America from Kiev—from *outside* Kiev, actually, which to Trillin as a child, who had never heard of shtetls, became "suburban Kiev."

I've always felt that Mr. Trillin's funniest writing was performance in print; the style is the same onstage and on page. He moves subtly and deftly from topic to topic, and there is nothing brash or abrasive here other than an overt bitterness about chicken à la king. The laughter is continuous.

—EDITH OLIVER

0 for 2

YOU don't have to like the pop music of the early sixties to hate "Suds," the uninspired musical now playing at the Criterion Center's Stage Left, at Broadway and Forty-fifth. Billed as a "Rocking 60's Musical Soap Opera" and directed by Will Roberson, "Suds" is an attempt to cash in on the early-sixties-nostalgia boom by weaving a flimsy story around golden oldies by the likes of Burt Bacharach, Neil Sedaka, James Brown, the Marvelettes, Otis Redding, and the Supremes. The story, such as it is, concerns Cindy (Christine Sevec), a teen-age laundromat attendant, who, after giving a rendition of "Please Mr. Postman," receives a jilting letter from her boyfriend and attempts suicide. Enter two Capra-esque "guardian angels" (Melinda Gilb and Susan Mosher), sent to comfort her and readjust her values. What follows is most charitably described as a series of song cues, and non sequiturs hoping to pass for song cues; the passage through of several men, played by Steven Gunderson; the entrance of yet a third celestial being, this time male (Mr. Gunderson again); and more song cues.

You have to be pretty desperate to be willing to rely on the dramatic possibilities inherent in "Please Mr. Postman" for the plot of a show. In fact, part of the problem with "Suds"—the innate stupidity of its conception—resides in the fact that most of the pop songs of the late fifties and early sixties have vestigial plots to begin with; they call up stories themselves, so building a story around them is redundant. Another part of the problem is that everyday life affords us many opportunities for hearing these tunes—they're played on radio stations and jukeboxes all over America, on movie soundtracks and party tapes. Oldies are so much a part of contemporary life outside the theatre that even if "Suds" were cleverer and wittier than it is the show would probably pall. As it is, "Suds" is about as uncreative as professional theatre gets. The script consists mostly of Corvair jokes, verbal and visual references to "That Girl" and Barbie dolls, and allusions to Miss Clairol, Pez candies, and "Gilligan's Island"—as though the mere mention of a familiar phrase or brand name were enough to entertain us. The numbers are capably sung—particularly by Miss Gilb and Mr. Gunderson, who, having written and conceived the show (along with Bryan Scott), know enough to perform deadpan. But only Javier Velasco's choreography is genuinely funny.

"Suds" originated at the San Diego Repertory Theatre and later moved to the Old Globe, where, according to the *Times*, it played to sellout houses. It may find its audience here, too, in the segment of the population only now discovering sixties music—the eight-to-twelve age group. But kids savvy enough to enjoy the music might leave the theatre feeling that they could have done better by the material themselves.

KICKING off the season at the Circle Rep, meanwhile, is "Reckless," a new play by Craig Lucas, which tries to package its own inadequacies as a statement about contemporary life. Mr. Lucas is the author of "Blue Window," which won the L.A. Drama Critics' Award (among others), and "Three Postcards," a musical on which he collaborated with the composer-lyricist Craig Carnelia. I never saw "Blue Window," much to my regret, but I remember "Three Postcards" as a sweetly hip and unpretentious interlude. "Reckless" begins promisingly, with a husband and wife bedded down for the night in their suburban home on Christmas Eve. The wife, Rachel (Robin Bartlett), is waxing eloquent about Christmas, family, and well-being, while the husband, Tom (Michael Piontek), sits silent, watching a flickering television screen. Just as we feel we can stand no more of the wife's effusions, the husband tells her that he has taken out a contract on her life. A hit man is due to arrive at any moment, he explains, and bundles her out into the snow. Why Tom has changed his mind and decided to spare Rachel is not clear, but we're jovially willing to accept a plot device that we hope will set Rachel on a journey of discovery as refreshing as the opening scene.

At the local filling station, Rachel hooks up with Lloyd (John Dossett), a mysterious physiotherapist, who takes her home to his deaf-mute, paraplegic wife, Pooty (Welker White), and the three set up house together. Lloyd turns out to be living bigamously under an assumed name, having deserted a previous family consisting of a wife afflicted with multiple sclerosis and two children, one of whom, owing to Lloyd's unfortunate handling of a snowblower while inebriated, is permanently brain-damaged. Pooty turns out to be only feigning deafness in order to secure her husband's love and attention; in their relationship with Rachel there is enough of zany interest to engage the mind for perhaps the next ten or fifteen minutes. But, in a scene guaranteed to insult the intelligence of any self-respecting audience, Rachel consults a psychiatrist—the first in a long line, all played by Joyce Reehling—and we get not only a recap of the plot but a spoon-feeding exegetical statement on how dreamlike it has all been. From this point on, "Reckless" becomes increasingly studied in its perversity and incoherence, and it ends by falling apart completely. Rachel takes a job at a humanitarian organization staffed by two sinister types (Kelly Connell and Susan Blommaert). There is an extended game-show sequence, a double murder involving some poisoned champagne, a suicide (also involving champagne), a talk-show sequence, and yet another murder. The penultimate sequence finds Rachel catatonic in a halfway-house shelter for the homeless.

By this time, Mr. Lucas's play has become mired in its own pretensions. Still, it's easy to see why the Circle Rep would take on a script like "Reckless," which at first glance looks like one of those dark comedies that use slightly absurdist actions and occurrences as metaphors for general moral and emotional predicaments. (David Steven Rappoport's "Cave Life," produced at the Circle Rep last season, and featuring the wonderful Miss Bartlett in a similar but significantly meatier role, was a more successful instance of this genre.) "Reckless" is ultimately mute; and style without substance is glib. It's possible to feel, indignantly, that when Mr. Lucas begins raising issues like mental illness and homelessness he is touching on subjects he has not earned the right to broach. You could graft any number of interpretations onto his play—that we're all escaping from something, that we all forge identities for ourselves, that the wrongs and traumas that we visit on our children are not our responsibility, only something that in turn was visited on us—but if you did you'd be putting more work into the enterprise than the playwright was willing to; all he has done is to cock a few bottles of champagne at us.

Norman René's production is as good as it could be, considering the material. He has directed a first-rate cast deftly and used a lot of gimmickry in an attempt to distract our attention from the essential vacuity of the work: the ironies in the play reside in Walker Hicklin's costumes, the sliding panels of Loy Arcenas's set, and the feelings inspired by Chuck London and Stewart Werner's copious sound engineering. The sprightly cast also does its best to make the play watchable, but to no avail. Not even the final scene—in which Miss Bartlett (now an analyst in her own right) and Mr. Piontek (now playing Tom, Jr., the grown-up son whom she is preparing to treat) manage, astonishingly, to wring pathos out of nothing—is worth waiting for.

I wish someone would declare a ban on plays with extended game-show sequences. I'd like to think audiences are above them. Prize-winning playwrights certainly should be.

—MIMI KRAMER

•

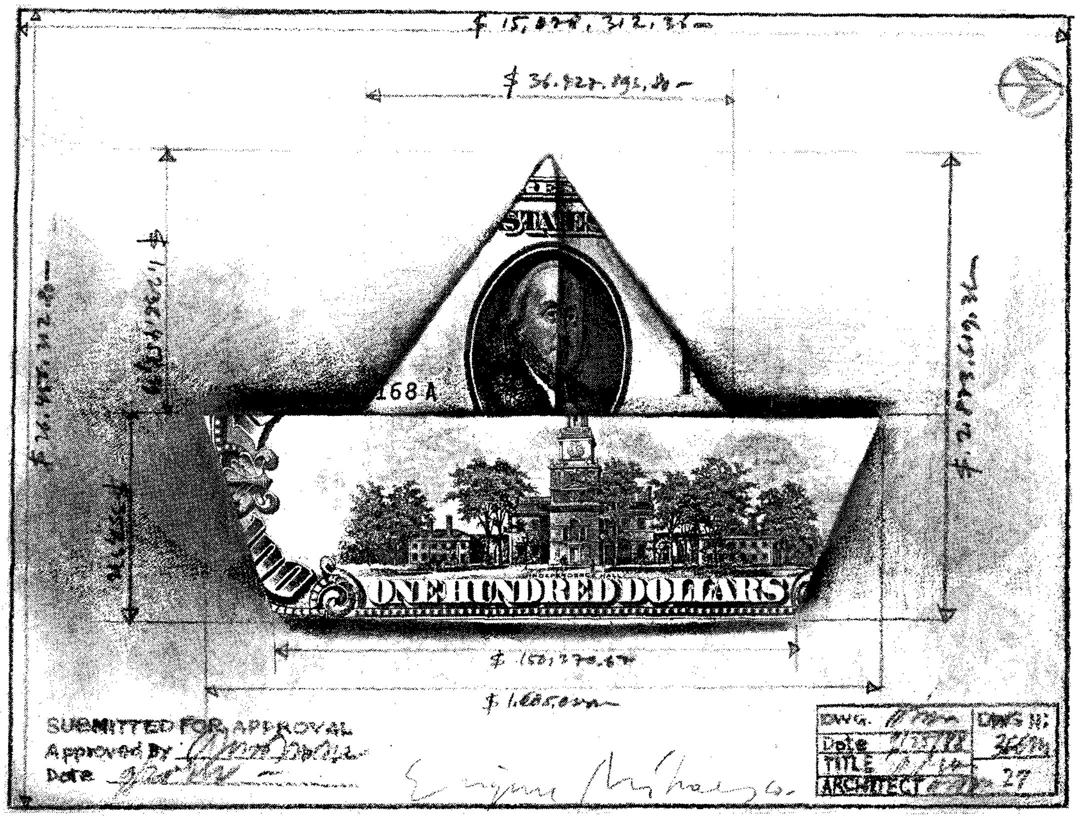
RAISED EYEBROWS DEPARTMENT

[*From the Lakeville* (*Conn.*) *Journal*]

And another change began to be seen from the intermingling of towns. Within several years, area residents for the first time were seeing women from Cornwall marrying women from Falls Village.

THE SPORTING SCENE

ABERRATION



ONLY time will reveal how much damage the 1988 America's Cup shambles has inflicted on an institution that seemed just eighteen months ago to have achieved a secure, virtually preëminent position among the world's sporting events. On September 7th, after more than a year of intricate legal maneuvering and highly publicized name-calling, America's Cup XXVII (as it has been officially retitled, à la "Rocky" and the Super Bowl) finally went to sea. By that time, it was probably too late to salvage more than a shred of dignity; the event had established its own character, and the sailing between Stars & Stripes and New Zealand was merely a footnote to the legal battles. "The boats in this America's Cup regatta have been traveling under aliases," wrote the San Diego *Union's* Michael Grant. "Their real names are Plaintiff and Defendant." The ensuing pair of races were as lopsided as the experts had predicted—far more so than even the eighteen-minute and twenty-one-minute margins of American victory suggested. Barry Lorge, also writing in the *Union*, reported a nickname for the regatta which paraphrased a classic Muhammad Ali-ism: "the Coma off Point Loma." And as a tidemark of the commercialism that seemed to have taken over the regatta, giant logos of Stars & Stripes' soft-drink and cigarette sponsors were visible everywhere along the San Diego waterfront, floating in the sky, on spectator craft and the competitor itself—an omnipresence that caused an observer to reflect on the oddity of an athletic event being backed by one product that rotted your teeth and another that destroyed your lungs.

Even after the waterborne anticlimax had ended, it appeared that the dregs of this Cup were not yet drained. Instead of leaving the stage gracefully, the antagonists indulged in a final slanging match before the assembled press, then prepared to remove to a more familiar setting—the New York State Supreme Court, where the proprietor of the New Zealand effort, the entrepreneur Michael Fay, has said he will attempt, for the second time, to have the defending boat declared illegal and the Cup forfeited to his Mercury Bay Boating Club. While most observers feel that Fay's chances of success in the courtroom are not much greater than they were on the water, at this writing it is still conceivable that the next America's Cup will take place off Auckland, and not off San Diego.

That question of the race site—and, by extension, the financial rewards expected to flow into it—may be what the unedifying wrangle of the past fifteen months has mostly been about. The old investigative adage "Follow the money" had not been particularly applicable in decoding America's Cup campaigns until the Australian-sponsored extravaganza at Fremantle, early in 1987, that helped fuel a tourist bonanza for the host nation (and brought the Cup back to the United States, in the nominal custody of the San Diego Yacht Club, whose paladin Dennis Conner had won it from the defending Aussies, 4–0). It is, of course, impossible to determine exactly how much money the Cup has attracted to Australia, but there is no question that collective San Diego—the county, the city, the port district, the yacht club, and Conner's Sail America group—expected the defense they had scheduled for 1991 to attract well over a billion dollars in jobs and trade. Whether the expectations were realistic or not, the prospect of a sum like this is a factor in itself, and one that has to be considered in any attempt to comprehend the behavior of the participants.

Money aside, the America's Cup continues to exert a powerful emotional hold on nearly all those who become closely involved with it, just as it has for almost a century and a half. An individual's Cup obsession may be inspired by nautical patriotism, megalomania, intellectual fascination, a passionate love for sailing's grandest event, simple greed, or (as seems likely in most human beings) a combination of motives that defies precise disentangling. Whatever its causes, America's Cup fever has always been characterized by extremes in speech and action, and never more so than in the series just concluded. Some of what was said and done was (especially on the New Zealand side) clearly tactical posturing, often in pursuit of an imagined courtroom advantage; much of it, however, reflected (especially among the San Diegans) an increasingly vindictive hostility, which finally spilled completely into public view at the regatta's closing press conference—usually an occasion for papering over even the most severe disagreements among the contestants. Until the resolution of Michael Fay's legal dispute with San Diego, and perhaps even afterward, this combination of anger, money, and intransigence will continue to threaten not just the future of the Cup as a profitable event but, more important, the almost mystical stature it had achieved in the hundred and thirty-seven years since it first arrived in the United States.

THE America's Cup is a true serial, at once episodic and unending; every campaign is connected to the one before, and sometimes to several preceding efforts. The participation of New Zealand is relatively new, dating effectively from 1983, when its neighbor Australia wrested the Cup from the New York Yacht Club, which had held it from the beginning. The winning Royal Perth Yacht Club, using a format developed over the years by the N.Y.Y.C., quickly announced that it would accept simultaneous challenges from yacht clubs of other nations; these clubs, working under the aegis of a "challenger of record" (the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda, of Sardinia), would stage a multinational elimination regatta, in Twelve-Metre sloops, to determine which of the challengers—they eventually numbered thirteen—was to sail for the Cup against Royal Perth in 1987, off Fremantle, in Western Australia.

In that contest, the New Zealand team was a national effort, sailing under the burgee of the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron and drawing financial and logistical support from several industries and, it was strongly rumored, the government. Motivations behind the challenge certainly included national pride, but an honestly commercial note also surfaced, when the Kiwi team's manager said, to the *Times*' Barbara Lloyd, "New Zealand is here [in Fremantle] to win the America's Cup industry. That is what I'm after." The speaker was Michael Fay, whose organizational credentials were considerably more impressive than his sailing experience. Fay, then thirty-seven years old, was already a multimillionaire businessman, whose firm had been in existence since 1975. According to its description of itself, Fay, Richwhite & Company Limited deals in "corporate banking, securities and money market trading, equity markets, funds management, futures trading and foreign exchange." Its clients include banks, governments, national and international corporations, and "high net worth individuals." The firm has offices in New Zealand and Australia, and in Hong Kong and London. Last year, its profits were a hundred and thirty million dollars. Fay's personal wealth has been estimated at about twice that sum.

As boss of the Royal New Zealand's challenge, Fay presided over the design and construction of the world's first three fibreglass Twelve-Metres, often referred to as the Plastic Fantastics. In 1987, all other competitive Twelves were built in aluminum, and many observers wondered why the Kiwis had gone to glass-reinforced plastic instead. At a press conference, Dennis Conner, in what may have been an off-the-cuff remark, asked rhetorically, "Why would you build [a Twelve] in fibreglass unless you wanted to cheat?"—presumably in details of construction, which were considered extremely difficult to analyze in a fibreglass hull.

The legitimacy of the Kiwi Twelve, known from her sail number as KZ-7, was formally questioned, but Fay and

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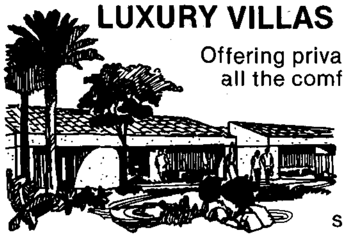

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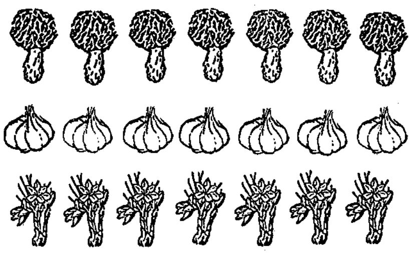

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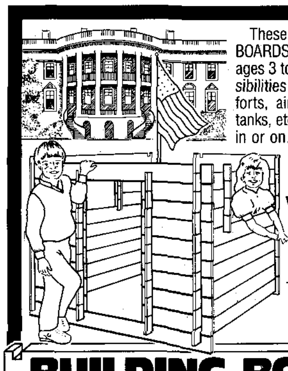
the New Zealanders prevailed, and KZ-7 went on to win thirty-seven out of thirty-eight races in the challengers' eliminations. She was a heavy popular favorite when she entered the finals—in which, however, Conner's Stars & Stripes, representing the San Diego Yacht Club, conclusively nailed the Kiwis, 4–1. Some observers claim that residual bitterness from Conner's side-long accusation and from the intensity of Stars & Stripes' competition in Fremantle was behind Fay's 1988 assault on the Cup. Fay denies it, but on January 15th of this year Conner himself declared that the New Zealanders' unprecedented challenge "results from—and is motivated by—the sting of Michael Fay's decisive defeats at Fremantle."

Conner sealed his Australian victory on February 4, 1987. The America's Cup was now officially in the custody of the San Diego Yacht Club—but not, as it developed, in the club's control. Apparently because some of its members had apprehensions about the financial demands of the Fremantle campaign, the S.D.Y.C. had in 1985 made a contract with the Stars & Stripes fund-raising arm, a tax-exempt organization known as Sail America, that gave it, inter alia, the right to manage the next defense, contingent upon a successful challenge. (The organization's seldom used full name, Sail America Foundation for International Understanding, was presumably invented to cloud the minds of the Internal Revenue Service, and not as the exercise in irony it now looks like.)

The S.D.Y.C.'s reluctance to retain direct responsibility for the event it was about to lend its banner to is understandable. While the century-old club is one of the foremost in the country, with a long roster of sailing champions and regattas to its credit, its leaders had no experience in handling a combined international invasion and three-ring circus, which was what the Cup now resembled. The expenses as well as the responsibilities looked gigantic, and there was (and remains) a considerable fraction of the membership which wasn't interested in the Cup at all.

Having signed away their right to control events, the gentlemen from San Diego were unable, immediately after Conner's victory, to issue a notice of the regatta at which they would defend their new trophy—a formal invitation that would specify the date and place



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and the type of yacht in which competitors would sail. Instead, the S.D.Y.C. offered a casual invitation to the next defense, which most people assumed would be in 1990 or 1991. The lack of formality passed unnoticed, and no fewer than twenty-two prospective challengers put up an ante of twenty-five thousand dollars each to get into the game.

Inside a couple of months, Sail America and the S.D.Y.C. were quarrelling publicly over details of the forthcoming event, and especially over the composition of yet a third body, the San Diego America's Cup Committee, which the two organizations were setting up to handle such matters as choosing the site for the 1991 regatta. The authoritative newsletter *America's Cup Report* observed at the time, "In the political and legal maneuvering that has followed, there is an old familiarity. It's just that the brouhaha so often associated with the Cup started earlier than might be expected."

It may seem odd to a bystander that a question of site would even arise, since San Diego possesses a California-perfect climate, the tourist accommodations of a major resort city, and a superb harbor. Everything, in fact, but wind. Fremantle had wind, lots of it, and all the Twelve-Metres—including Conner's own—that were built for the 1987 competition had been conceived for or tailored to heavy-weather conditions. None of them would be competitive against a Twelve designed specifically for the light airs that prevail off San Diego's Point Loma.

Before going to Fremantle, Conner's 1987 team had trained for months in Hawaii, whose winds and seas closely resemble those off Western Australia, and he and his advisers retained an obvious fondness for the area, which also, and not parenthetically, has superb harbor facilities and a thriving tourist economy. Once word got out that places other than San Diego might be considered, San Francisco and the former Cup site, Newport, Rhode Island, also put in bids, and it was even suggested that massive financing by the gambling industry and Donald Trump might make Atlantic City, New Jersey, a possibility.

Such speculation didn't increase Sail America's popularity with what might be termed the chamber-of-commerce element in San Diego, and the scuffling became untidy—so much so that while the Conner camp's attention was elsewhere the S.D.Y.C. packed the America's Cup Committee with business types. Even after both sides submitted to binding arbitration, and the committee's composition was adjusted to give the sailors more voice in decisions, a bitter taste remained. And no commitment about the 1991 regatta site was made.

MEANWHILE—we are now in June, 1987—Michael Fay was succumbing to what he himself has called an incurable case of America's Cup fever. He went with the New Zealand sailors and KZ-7 to the Twelve-Metre Class World Championships in Sardinia, and the event turned out to be a reunion of Fremantle competitors, some of them under new ownership and new names. (The most striking example was Alan Bond's Australia III, now known as Bengal and sailing under the Rising Sun, part of the latest Japanese infatuation with the exotic diversions of the West.) New Zealand won the regatta, which was held in very light airs, and also staved off an attempt to have fibreglass Twelve-Metres made illegal under class construction rules, but the torpid sailing (if not the politicking) seems to have completed Fay's disenchantment with Twelves. At just about this time, Fay says, he was informed by his legal adviser, a thirty-four-year-old attorney and sailor named Andrew Johns, that it would be legally possible to challenge for the Cup in a totally new type of vessel.

Fay greeted Johns' opinion with skepticism but checked it out with other authorities anyway. His reasons for doing so (he has since claimed) were partly a lack of excitement at the prospect of sailing a Twelve off San Diego in 1991 and partly a distaste for the already visible commercialization of the coming event. This may, of course, be true, but Fay's San Diego opponents have a different reading. Kenneth Poovey, an attorney for the S.D.Y.C., has called Fay "a takeover artist, a corporate raider," who "works by creating fear and using intimidation." And several San Diegans I talked to asserted that Fay's motive in the challenge was mainly commercial: the aggrandizement of his nation, his home town, and his firm. Fay's partner, David Richwhite, perhaps inadvertently lent credence to this theory

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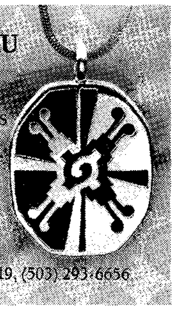

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when he told the *Times Magazine* that his colleague was "the cheapest P.R. man in the world," and said flatly that the 1987 Cup challenge had "lubricated the wheels of business, and fantastically well."

Even if the San Diegans' accusations were true, one might fairly ask what difference it made. Fay is scarcely the first challenger whose Cup participation has had commercial overtones. The many enterprises of Alan Bond, from real estate to beer, certainly benefitted from his four Cup campaigns, which culminated in the Aussie's 1983 victory, and even the seriocomic challenges of Baron Marcel Bich, of France, made the international public more familiar with the ballpoint pens and disposable razors that carry a truncated version of his name. But the most famous commercial self-aggrandizer in America's Cup history was Sir Thomas Lipton, the tea magnate, who financed five consecutive unsuccessful challenges between 1899 and 1930, and whose benign, yachting-capped countenance became well known to millions in consequence. On our own side of the water, Ted Turner, who defended the Cup in Courageous in 1974, became a nationally recognized figure partly as a result of his exploit (and his panache). Even the present defending skipper would probably not be the proprietor of Dennis Conner Sports, Incorporated, if he were only a champion in the Star Class and a former Olympic medallist.

Questions of hypocrisy aside (and hypocrisy is as basic to the Cup as wind is), the idea of a daring challenge from left field clearly appealed to both the wheeler-dealer and the romantic in Fay, a complex man, whose disarming informality can at least temporarily charm even the most hostile antagonist or hardened journalist. Fay came to the conclusion that Andrew Johns' startling opinion was correct, being based firmly on accurate perceptions of what the America's Cup was all about.

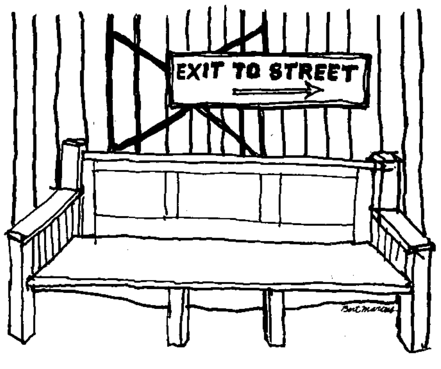
As every ESPN-watching insomniac must know, the prize won from the British by the schooner America in 1851 was a regular trophy of the Royal Yacht Squadron known as the Hundred Guinea Cup. In 1857, the owners of the America presented the cup, which had by then acquired the name of their vessel, to the New York Yacht Club as a perpetual trophy for international competition. The N.Y.Y.C. was then as brash as the young United States itself, and as much given to contemporary bare-knuckle notions of sport, so the donors of the America's Cup circumscribed their trophy with a Deed of Gift—a constitution, so to speak—that set out some basic conditions for equitable competition, at least partly as a way of restraining the predatory tendencies of their clubmates and thus stimulating interest among prospective challengers.

The Deed, which has been amended from time to time since it was first composed, is still a very simple document. Deceptively simple, perhaps, in that it seems to allow a number of different interpretations of its few clauses. One question that lay at the heart of the legal wrangling of 1987 and 1988 had to do with the way a prospective challenge could be realized. In the present wording of the Deed, "Any organized Yacht Club of a foreign country . . . shall always be entitled to the right of sailing a match for this Cup, with a yacht or vessel propelled by sails only and constructed in the country to which the Challenging Club belongs, against any one yacht or vessel constructed in the country of the Club holding the Cup."

In order to challenge, the Deed says, the challenger need only "give ten months' notice, in writing, naming the days for the proposed races." The written *défi* must include certain basic data about the challenger: "length on load water-line; beam at load water-line and extreme beam; and draught of water."

In terms of the types of boats, the Deed of Gift allows a vast flexibility:

> The competing yachts or vessels, if of one mast, shall be not less than forty-four feet nor more than ninety feet on the load water-line; if of more than one mast they shall not be less than eighty feet nor more than one hundred and fifteen feet on the load water-line.
>
> Centre-board or sliding keel vessels shall always be allowed to compete in any race for this Cup, and no restriction nor limitation whatever shall be placed upon the use of such centre-board or sliding keel.



Those are virtually the only limits the Deed places on vessels that may compete in the event.

With the choice of vehicle so broad, the details of each regatta ought properly to be tailored to the boats sailing it, and the Deed accordingly states that the challenging and the defending clubs may "by mutual consent, make any arrangement satisfactory to both as to the dates, courses, number of trials [i.e. races], rules and sailing regulations, and any and all other conditions of the match, in which case also the ten months' notice may be waived."

When the Deed was drawn up, it also took into account the innate contentiousness of sailors, and specified what would happen if the two sides could not agree on terms: a bare-bones duel on the open ocean, best two out of three races over two very simple courses—"twenty nautical miles to windward and return" for the first race, followed by "an equilateral triangular race of thirty-nine nautical miles, the first side of which shall be a beat to windward"—and, if a third race should be necessary, a repeat of the first course. If it came to that kind of contest, the defender was not required to specify its vessel until just before the start—though the same yacht would have to sail all the races.

In the years since the Deed of Gift was written, it has always been possible to arrive at mutual (if occasionally grudging) consent on the terms of the Cup matches. Since 1930, the competing yachts have come from carefully regulated classes—first the J and, after 1958, the Twelve-Metre—that had specific design parameters, with the result that the boats were potentially equal and generally similar in size and appearance. But nowhere in the Deed was a particular class of boat named as the official yacht for Cup races.

San Diego, in its innocent, disorganized fashion, was behaving as if the Cup were an invitational Twelve-Metre regatta, while Fay perceived the reality to be quite different: the Cup's Deed of Gift offered the Kiwis, or anyone making a formal challenge, a match in ten months, in a type of boat to be named by the challenger. For a man obsessed by the Cup, the opportu-

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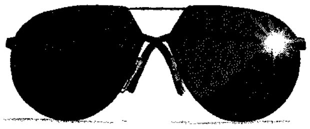

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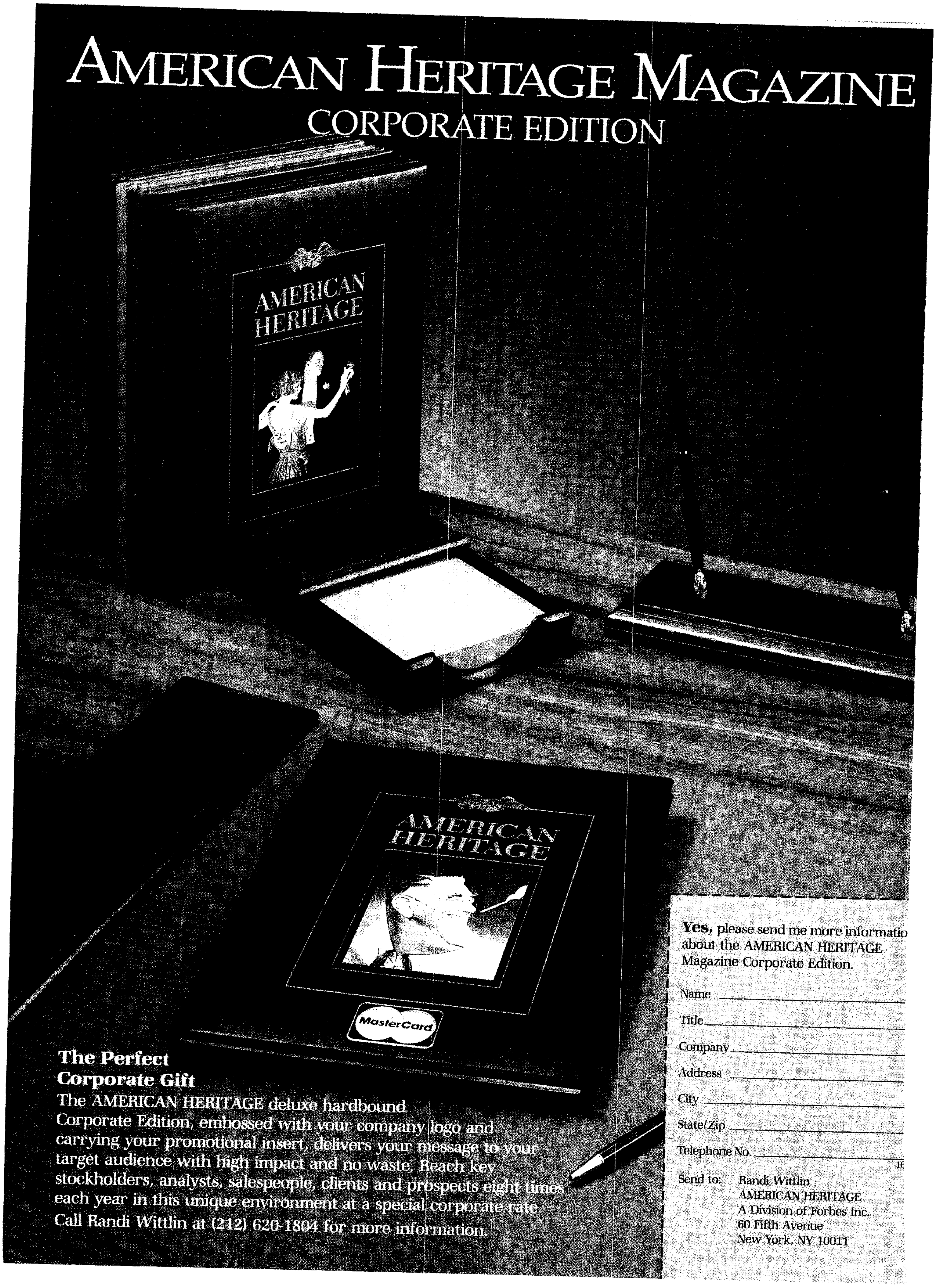

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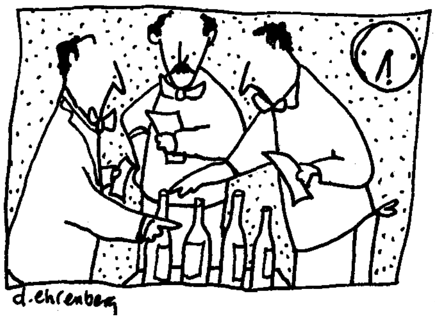
nity was as tremendous as the risks. There was no need to wait until 1991, no need to create another fleet of archaic, ponderous Twelves; best of all, there was a chance to restore the tone of nautical grandeur that Fay felt the Cup competition deserved. An unfriendly reader of Fay's motives could add that such a unilateral challenge would utterly sabotage San Diego's plans for a multinational regatta and effectively disenfranchise nearly two dozen Twelve-Metre syndicates that were already standing obediently in line. And if one attributed truly Machiavellian motives to the New Zealander one could note that finessing the other syndicates also meant avoiding the uncertainties of a challenge round-robin, which the Kiwis might not win.

Once his decision was made, Fay moved quickly and quietly. He needed a yacht club to file his challenge, but the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron was apparently committed to the normal challenge process, so Fay went instead to the obscure Mercury Bay Boating Club, whose membership was then seventy, most of them sheepherders, and whose clubhouse (as reporters have been delighted to note) was a 1956 Ford Zephyr sedan. At about the same time, Fay also got in touch with New Zealand's best-known yacht designer, a prickly, bespectacled expatriate named Bruce Farr, who had worked with Fay on the 1987 challenge. Farr, whose office is in Annapolis, Maryland, quickly provided his principal with the requisite set of dimensions (which, of course, suggested a reasonably complete design concept behind them), and on July 17, 1987, Fay invited himself to lunch in San Diego with the commodore and vice-commodore of the S.D.Y.C., and dropped his challenge like a safe from an upper-story window on those unsuspecting gentlemen.

Not only did Fay propose to wash out the San Diegans' planned 1991 parade by staging his regatta in June, 1988, he also proposed to sail in a mysterious sloop that would be no less than ninety feet on the waterline, a length that implied an over-all size that might be as much as a hundred and fifty feet—more than twice the length of a Twelve-Metre. The challenge was too preposterous to entertain seriously, and the S.D.Y.C. decided simply to ignore it. After three weeks had passed with no response, the Kiwis went back to the S.D.Y.C., only to learn that San Diego planned at last to issue a formal notice of regatta for 1991.

Because of the unique position of the America's Cup competition, which lies outside the regular structure of sailboat racing, Fay and the New Zealanders did not have the normal recourse of protests to either the United States Yacht Racing Union or the International Y.R.U. The only place they could go for relief was the New York State Supreme Court, the legal administrator of the Cup's Deed of Gift. On September 9, 1987, the case went before Justice Carmen Beauchamp Ciparick, who faced the first of a seemingly endless series of submissions and affidavits by the two sides. It appears that at this stage most of the San Diegans were confident that the Justice would support their position, which was, essentially, that the rogue challenge ran contrary to the orderly precedent of a century and so ought to be disallowed. Some of the people close to the defense organization, however, were not nearly so sure that this argument would prevail. One participant, who has asked not to be identified, says that once he had studied the Deed of Gift he knew that San Diego's legal position was hopeless; the S.D.Y.C. and Sail America would have to design and field a defender, against a type of boat whose outlines were only dimly apparent.

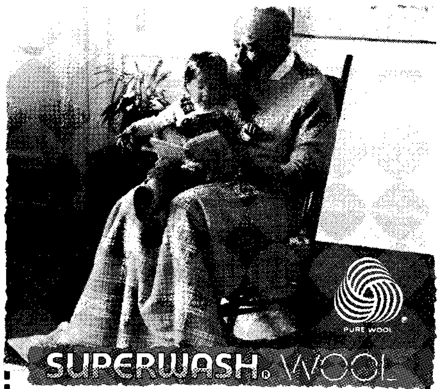
By mid-November, with no decision yet announced, rumors began to seep through the yachting community that the San Diegans were going to lose their case. On November 20th, Sail America's executive vice-president, Thomas Ehman, discussed the situation in an interview in the San Diego *Tribune*. Ehman, a thirty-three-year-old former sailing champion, who has spent most of his adult life on the administrative side of sailing, and looks and sounds like the quintessential corporate man, made a rare misstatement, which was to haunt him and his associates over the next year. If the S.D.Y.C. and Sail America lost in court, Ehman was quoted as saying, "we'll jimmy the rules to win this thing in the same way the New York Yacht Club did so it could beat its challengers for a hundred and thirty-two years." The context of the remark made it clear that Ehman was referring to the legitimate privileges that the Deed of Gift conferred on a defender in return for the advantages it gave the challenger. But the damage was done. Picked up by Fay's alert P.R. apparatus, "jimmy the rules" became a pejorative label that the Kiwis slapped on every maneuver of the defense campaign.



Five days later, on November 25th, Justice Ciparick infuriated most San Diegans and confounded the rest by ruling that the Deed of Gift meant just what it said, no more and no less, and that the S.D.Y.C. "may either accept the challenge, forfeit the Cup, or negotiate agreeable terms with the challenger." Only at this point, says Britton Chance, Jr., of the Stars & Stripes design team, did the Americans really sit down to figure out what they were sailing against and how to respond to it.

IF the other aspects of the 1988 America's Cup rarely rise above a grating stridency, the design competition—which was, of course, the real contest—has the fascination of military intelligence. When the members of the Stars & Stripes design team made their first formal evaluation, they had two firm pieces of information to work with. One was the scanty set of specifications supplied with the written challenge, and the other was what they knew about their colleague Bruce Farr. The written challenge specified a single-masted vessel ninety feet on the waterline—the maximum allowable under the Deed of Gift—with a draft of twenty-one feet. The boat's extreme beam (presumably at deck level) was given as twenty-six feet, and her beam at the waterline was to be twelve feet less. Though Fay was not required to do so, he had also specified that his vessel would be a "keel yacht," but that term was so vague as to be useless.

The American design group, which at first consisted of the design-team leader, John K. Marshall, Chance, and



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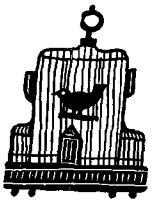
David D. Nelson, was from the beginning alert for disinformation coming out of the New Zealand camp; since Farr would have only one swing at the Americans, it was very much in his interest to keep them from accurately figuring out the details of his boat. The numbers he had supplied were in themselves not too helpful. As both Chance and Marshall have since pointed out, the stated dimensions could have defined several kinds of radical single-hulled vessels, a very narrow catamaran, or even a trimaran (whose waterline beam would be measured across only two of its three hulls, since one of the two outside hulls is always out of the water). A catamaran, everyone agreed, would be the fastest, but Farr was not a catamaran designer, nor did the proportions seem right for a cat.

Farr's reputation in larger craft was based strongly on his ability to get the most out of glass fibre construction, especially in vessels of minimal weight. One boat of his that seemed particularly applicable to the America's Cup problem was an ultra-light forty-footer he had created for racing on Italy's Lake Garda. By taking the basic concept of the Lake Garda speedster (as it is popularly known) and expanding its dimensions, Farr might come up with a very fast monohull sloop whose narrow hull flared into wings at deck level. Because naval architects, like other people, tend to stick with successful concepts, the American designers suspected that they might be facing a giant Lake Garda boat (as indeed they were), but they couldn't be sure, and if they guessed wrong there would be no time for a second attempt.

Rather than try to design their weapon as an improved version of the enemy's, the Americans decided to change the terms of engagement—to go for the boat that would win, regardless of type. A catamaran, combining speed, reasonable maneuverability, and affordable cost, was the obvious choice for a closed-course race. An ultra-lightweight cat of sixty feet or so should, the Stars & Stripes brain trust decided, be ideal for conditions off San Diego, and easily able to beat either the ninety-foot-waterline monohull they expected to meet or an oversized multihull if that should confront them. In addition, such a boat could be designed, built, tested, and (if necessary) reworked in the time allowed. When it came to actually drawing the lines of their boat, however, the original Stars & Stripes designers—men whose experience was with more or less traditional vessels—called in specialists, including the multihull designers Duncan T. MacLane and Gino J. Morrelli, to work on the hulls, and aeronautical engineers to experiment with rigid-wing configurations that might (and did) provide even more speed than conventional fabric sails. Using space-age materials with an abandon that brought the defense to the brink of insolvency, the expanded Stars & Stripes team created a superb vehicle, which has yet to be raced to anything near its limits. (To me, a sad note was the speed with which, after the race, the Americans turned their backs on the men and the technology that won for them. Multihullists have always been the Cinderellas of the boating world, and their excursion to the heights was a very brief one.)



Barring a collective brainstorm among the Stars & Stripes design team, or a cyclone on the racecourse, the 1988 Cup races were won and lost at the moment a cat was chosen. What remained was only a mopping-up operation. Over the first five months of 1988 came a joint American-New Zealand exercise in public-relations obfuscation, a long battle of mutual accusation about the possibility of a multichallenger series, during which it gradually became clear that neither the Kiwis nor the San Diegans wanted such an elimination process—the former because they might lose, the latter because it would drag out the already resented series.

Next came the New Zealanders' last counterattack—an appeal, on May 5th, to Justice Ciparick to rule that San Diego was in contempt of her original decision authorizing the regatta. The Kiwis' reasoning was: (a) the Justice had required San Diego to sail a "match" with Mercury Bay; (b) a match was by definition a contest between equals; (c) a catamaran-monohull match was universally known to be unequal; therefore, San Diego had flouted Justice Ciparick's order. But the New Zealanders were really asking the Judge to shift from her initial, strictly literal interpretation of the Deed (the reading they had loudly applauded at the time) to a loose, imaginative reconstruction of what the Deed's authors had intended. Justice Ciparick declined to oblige. Besides noting that San Diego had not yet sailed the race, and therefore could not be held in contempt, her ruling, issued on July 25th, hinted broadly that nothing in the Deed forbade multihulls—though she did say that New Zealand could raise the question again, once the regatta had been sailed. After that, nothing remained for the New Zealanders but to go out and get themselves thwacked around the course.

IT was apparent to both sides, as well as to most observers, that, whoever might wind up staging the next America's Cup, steps had to be taken to avoid the wretched contretemps of 1987-88. The first such step was the S.D.Y.C.'s issuance of a clear-cut set of ground rules for a multination regatta leading to a 1991 Cup; the second step was the appointment of a three-man body (referred to, inescapably, as the Wise Men) composed of representatives of the three yacht clubs that have held the Cup—New York, Royal Perth, and San Diego—to serve as a court of appeals for future Cup disputes. When Michael Fay announced that he would go along with both steps, whether he won or lost in court, the ambient rancor seemed to drop by several decibels.

Aside from Fay's post-regatta legal campaign, which most regarded as a face-saving device, only two important matters remained to be disposed of. One was the proliferating commercialization of the regatta, particularly in the form of advertising on the boats themselves. Though Mercury Bay (a.k.a. Michael Fay) could afford to sail a pristine ship, San Diego claimed loud and long that it could not. Accordingly, the cat carried a downwind headsail with an immense soft-drink logo on it, and had the devices of the main sponsors coyly affixed to the inner sides of her hulls, on the stern crossbar that connected the hulls, and, in the second race, on the wing sail itself. For the cameras at the post-race press conference, the emblems of the Stars & Stripes sponsors were Velcroed onto the screen behind the American side of the stage. (They were hastily removed by the aptly named moderator, Bruno Trouble, before the start of nonpartisan presentations on the same stage.) One thing was completely obvious: although some of the traditional sponsors of sailing events, companies like Rolex and Mount Gay rum, are content to be reasonably unobtrusive, neither taste nor moderation can be expected from the likes of Marlboro cigarettes or Pepsi-Cola, so if the next Cup competition is to be distinguishable from a stock-car race someone outside the two camps will have to prepare a repressive advertising policy and make it stick.

The other question that remained concerned the boats. If Fay accomplished nothing else in his kamikaze raid, he seems to have publicly exposed the Twelve-Metre yacht for the antique that most designers already knew it to be. Even if the present owners of Twelves, who constitute most of the prospective challengers, insist on one more outing for their craft, it will be the last—and, in all probability, the end of the Twelve-Metre Class. The next America's Cup boat will be far faster than a Twelve, probably bigger, and much more interesting to watch. More to the point, it will automatically become the benchmark for yachting's conspicuous consumers, the only people who would want a Twelve anyway. In a few years, a friend remarked to me after the second race, the extant Twelve-Metres will all have been melted down to make soft-drink cans.

And what, I wondered, would become of Fay's folly, the mighty New Zealand?

"Guitar picks," my friend replied.

—Tony Gibbs

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UP LIFE'S LADDER

[*From Class Notes in the Oberlin Alumni Magazine*]

Carolyn Rutland is a senior staff geochemist for Science Applications International Corp. (SAIC), located in Las Vegas. Her position is related to high-level nuclear waste disposal. She says that SAIC is the T&MSS contractor for the NNWSI Project managed by the WMPO of the U.S. DOE, NOO. NNWSI Project work is sponsored by the OGR under OCRWM at DOE/HQ. As a geochemist in the SIB of the TISD at SAIC, she is responsible for the integration effort of the geochemical aspects of lithologic/mineralogic investigations and of investigations in sorption and solubility in the NNWSI Project. She works with NNWSI participants (i.e., LASL, SNL, LLNL, and the USGS) as part of the CWRMP. She will colead a joint IGC/IAVCEI field trip on the EMV-BLB in 1989. Her second EDC is Mar. 29, 1988.

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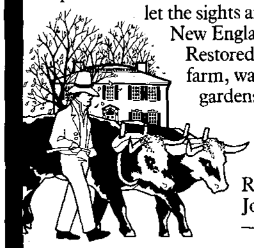

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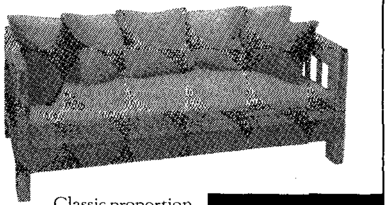

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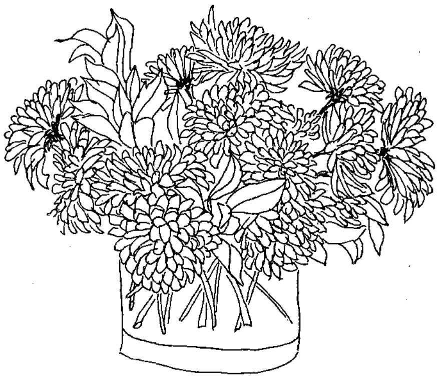
LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

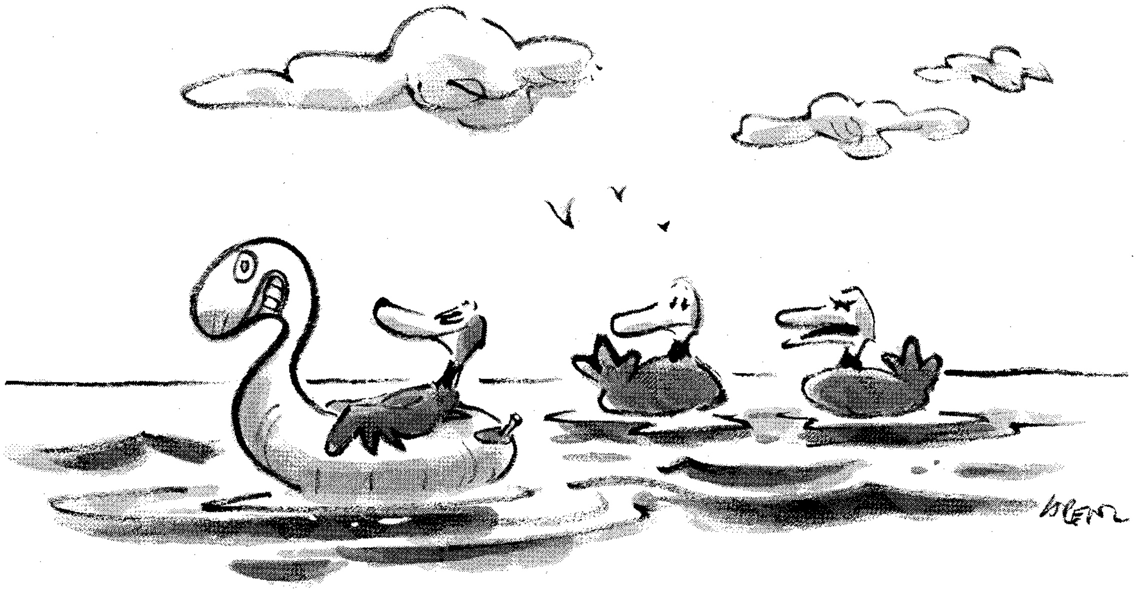
SEPTEMBER 23

THIS most dismal of Presidential campaigns, which has now gone through its first phase, leading up to the debate Sunday night, has set a new low in modern campaigning and left us with the question of whether, after the election is over, either man will be able to govern. At this point, it is hard to see how either candidate can be an effective leader—will be able to build and hold enough public support to take the country through a difficult passage. Oddly, we have two candidates for the Presidency neither of whom comes off as a natural politician, yet a President must be a good politician to be successful. Both of them got nominated by utilizing smart tactics and superior resources, and by the failings of their competitors, but these things fall short of what is required of a national leader. Neither candidate is very spontaneous or very interesting. The public's lack of any real enthusiasm for either one of them is nearly palpable, and unless this changes neither one will take office with much wind at his back. The shifting polls mainly reflect a lack of strong support for either man—of an unprecedented scale. Without strong public support, even at the outset, the next President will have difficulty setting the agenda, dealing with Congress, or bringing coherence to now jumbled, even chaotic, economic and defense policies. The Reagan legacy will not be an enviable inheritance, but it's not surprising that neither candidate is talking very much about hard choices that will have to be made. It's generally assumed that there's little to gain from that. The particularly low and mean nature of this campaign (which also should not have come as a surprise) is attributable to the cynical—and thus far effective—strategy of the Bush campaign. Michael Dukakis is no pushover—he can play rough, and has done his share of distorting Bush's record—but George Bush's nearly unrelenting onslaught, distorting and demagoguing Dukakis's record (a record that does have its vulnerabilities), will, if it works, have further debased the coin of Presidential elections. Just as Reagan's 1984 election showed that a candidate can get away with being sequestered—offered to the public only via well-staged scenes—and saying little, the Bush campaign, if it is successful, and if it stays on its present course, as Bush's pleased advisers say it's going to, will have also established that just about anything goes. If Dukakis is defeated, it will be for other reasons as well, some of them exogenous factors having to do with neither candidate, and some having to do with his own failings as a candidate. But conclusions will be drawn about what seems to work. There are no ground rules for Presidential elections; we know that there will be attacks and exaggerations and distortions, but we more or less trust the candidates and the people around them to keep things within bounds. It is impossible to draw the line in the abstract, but we can tell when the line has been crossed. A backlash is always possible, but if there is to be one the opponent has to be an effective and likable enough candidate to be the beneficiary—a standard that Dukakis has yet to meet.

THE biggest surprise thus far has been the change in Bush as a candidate—something the Dukakis campaign certainly hadn't reckoned on. The tentative, frantic, and often awkward Bush has been replaced by a forceful, aggressive, and only sometimes awkward Bush. His aides say that this all came about when Reagan departed from New Orleans, that Bush had planned all along to hold back until he was officially the leader of his party. But this is too pat. Clearly, if Bush had been capable of being a better candidate before, he would have been one. Clearly, the difference comes from a discipline that has been imposed on him by his friend and campaign chairman James Baker—who can talk to Bush in a way no one else can—and by Bush's continuous training by Roger Ailes, his media adviser. In the primaries Ailes had been somewhat—but far from completely—successful at getting Bush to speak slowly, thus keeping his voice at a lower register and his thoughts under some control. But now a more compliant Bush seldom strays from his prepared text—it's when he does that he can get in trouble (as when he recently said, "I stand for anti-bigotry, anti-Semitism, anti-racism"). Bush's mangling of thoughts or words when on his own bespeaks a certain sloppiness of thought processes, or some sort of short-circuiting that goes on in his head. (His advancing, on September 7th, the date of Pearl Harbor by three months was by itself no big thing, but it was part of a strange pattern.) Baker is well aware of the importance of discipline, knows that a careless statement ("we tried to kick a little ass last night") can become a defining event, and he has made it clear to Bush that if he wants to win he must stick to the program. Bush is kept as inaccessible to the press as possible—which is almost entirely—to ward off any stray embarrassing remarks by the man who wants to be President of the United States. Bush's success as a reincarnated candidate and his obvious new confidence are circular: the better he does, the more confident he feels, and the better he does, and so on. A combination of Ailes' coaching and the new confidence have improved Bush's body language—the flapping of the arms and the wiggling of the body are much reduced (but not gone). Ailes has tried to keep Bush from allowing his eyes to dart around nervously. He even looks larger. "Ailes is a genius," one Bush adviser says.



But this leaves us with the question of who is George Bush. What we see is a nearly totally packaged candidate following a script. And his willingness to follow the particular script he has been given also raises the question of what, if anything, is at his core. The Bush people say that their polling shows that Bush's attacks on Dukakis for vetoing a bill that required teachers to lead students in the Pledge of Allegiance have worked, and that the combination of the Pledge issue and attacks on certain positions that Dukakis has taken on crime has been very effective in undermining Dukakis, in getting across a picture of Dukakis as a Massachusetts liberal. "Liberal" has become a term of opprobrium in politics because it is associated with big government (which is presumed not to work, though the evidence, like the results of various programs, is mixed), high taxes, social engineering (though conservatives have their own forms of this), leftism in foreign policy—and also the civil-rights revolution. Reagan was able to capture and capitalize on the reaction against all these things—and Bush is seeking to follow his footsteps in this as in other respects. The plain fact is that Dukakis *is* a Massachusetts liberal, who took a number of positions in the sixties and seventies (when he was in the state legislature and in his first term as governor) that fit the tenor of his state and the times. Some he has taken more recently. He also believes in the efficacy of government programs, in governmental activism, though he has tried to devise programs that don't incur a great deal of government spending. (But he doesn't always get this across.) When the Bush people say that a politician of another stripe would have signed the Pledge bill even if, as Dukakis says, the state attorney general and a state-supreme-court advisory opinion said it was unconstitutional, and would have let it be tested in the courts, they have a point—if not a very uplifting one. For good or for ill, Dukakis is pretty stiff-necked as politicians go. (As the Bush people say, James Thompson, Governor of Illinois, and a Republican, signed a bill requiring schoolchildren to recite the Pledge.) Dukakis has supported the nuclear freeze, and he supported a proposal to exempt young men from Massachusetts from going to Vietnam. (The then governor of Massachusetts, a Republican, signed it.) Bush said on Labor Day, with intended innuendo, "I wouldn't be surprised if he thinks a naval exercise is something you find in Jane Fonda's workout book." Yet one of the ironies is that other, more liberal, Massachusetts politicians have resented Dukakis for not playing any significant role in the civil-rights or anti-Vietnam War movements. In the course of the nineteen-seventies, in part as a reaction to some of the actions of the antiwar movement, social conservatism became a strong political force: Jimmy Carter ran on conservative social values, and Ronald Reagan made them a touchstone of his Presidential campaign. The Bush people argue that conservative social values are still the prevailing ones in this country, and they have set out to systematically show that Bush is closer to a majority of the people on these issues than Dukakis is. Bush, in Boston yesterday to accept the endorsement of the Boston Police Patrolmen's Association (which has frequently supported Republicans), summed it up: the endorsement, he said, underscores "the fundamental differences that I have with my opponent on questions of values and how to treat the criminals. And when it comes to these questions, my opponent is simply out of the American mainstream." (Dukakis countered with a rally with police and other law-enforcement officials from Massachusetts and elsewhere, including Bush's adopted home state of Texas.)



"__That's__ what's the matter with kids today!"

• •

The Bush campaign is not offering rational discourse on these issues but instead is playing to atavistic feelings. As demagogic as Bush and his surrogates have been on the Pledge issue—asking why Dukakis doesn't want schoolchildren to say the Pledge of Allegiance, suggesting that he is the less patriotic candidate—polls show that the public has overwhelmingly gone along. But the real point of raising the Pledge issue is to place Dukakis far to the left on the ideological spectrum. The Bush people figure that any time a Dukakis surrogate talks about the Pledge as a constitutional, freedom-of-speech issue—as Dukakis did in late August—the Bush side wins. A Bush aide said to me recently, "They just don't get it. They shouldn't make legalistic arguments. You can't escape the common sense of it, which is, 'Let's be for kids saying the Pledge rather than against it.' " Bush's success with the Pledge issue has turned this into the most flag-bedecked campaign ever. Both candidates stand in front of very many flags, or very big flags, and their audiences are given little flags to wave. Bush topped off the flag contest by making visits to Findlay, Ohio, known as Flag City, and, a few days ago, visiting a flag factory in New Jersey. Most of the flags that are waved at political rallies are imported from Taiwan. Campaign workers scratch the "Made in Taiwan" imprint off the handles. By the end of this election, the flag could mean less, not more.

The Bush people feel that they have made their point about the Pledge (they shamed the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives into reciting the Pledge every morning) but that there remains much to be milked out of some crime issues. Next, the Bush people say, they will drive home the issue of the Massachusetts furlough plan, which allowed weekend fur-

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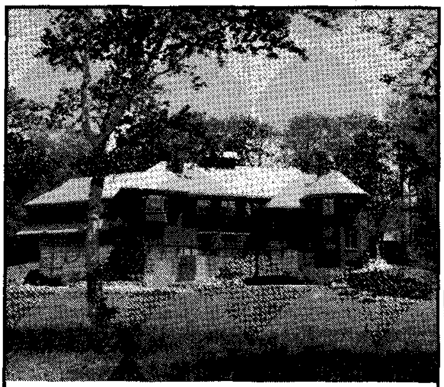

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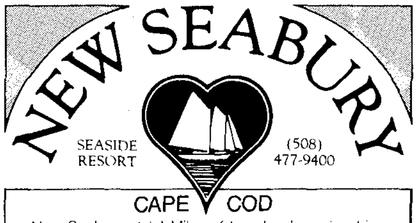

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loughs for first-degree murderers ineligible for parole. (Other states and the federal government have furlough plans, but none go that far, and Massachusetts' has been changed.) Willie Horton, who committed rape and robbery while on such a furlough, is about to become famous. (Bush has told audiences, incorrectly, that he also committed murder while on furlough.) One Bush strategist said to me recently, "Every woman in this country will know what Willie Horton looks like before this election is over." (Horton, who is black, has a somewhat menacing visage.) The furlough issue is mentioned in a Bush ad about crime, and the Bush campaign is considering whether to use Horton's picture in an ad. (It does appear in an ad run by an "independent" group, the National Security Political Action Committee, on some nationwide cable networks. The Bush campaign says it has nothing to do with this group, but that doesn't mean that it minds the ads.) The Bush campaign has already been running ads in California, Ohio, and Texas on Dukakis's crime record. (The Dukakis campaign is running one that argues that Dukakis has been tough on crime.) In Texas, the Republican Party has mailed a brochure to some three hundred thousand conservative—or "swing"—Democrats which has a picture of children with their hand on their heart and says, "Here are the words Dukakis doesn't want your child to have to say: I Pledge Allegiance to the Flag . . ." and which also points out that Dukakis opposes the death penalty and supports gun control. Recently, Bush, after being criticized for the McCarthyesque undertone in his saying that Dukakis is "a card-carrying member of the A.C.L.U.," pointed out that Dukakis had said in the course of the Iowa caucus contest, "I'm a card-carrying member of the American Civil Liberties Union." During a recent Bush visit to Philadelphia, Senator Arlen Specter, Republican of Pennsylvania and a former district attorney of Philadelphia, told reporters, "There's nothing wrong with belonging to the A.C.L.U." But the Bush people will not pass up what they think is good material.

THE Bush campaign organization functions with great discipline. A theme is decided upon and stayed with for days. (The idea had been for a theme a week, but outside events, or Dukakis speeches, sometimes call for a change.) Some Bush people say that the Dukakis campaign makes a mistake in changing subjects daily. (It used to change subjects within a given day but recently has started to stay on a topic for a day, and sometimes for more than a day.) The data-driven Bush campaign each night measures the impact of a particular Bush sally and decides when a point has been made or needs reinforcement. (The Dukakis campaign measures sentiment every night, but is not as efficient at getting the results smack into the campaign.) The Bush campaign also has a great advantage in being composed at the top of people who are running their third campaign together, and some have worked together longer than that. The Dukakis campaign doesn't come close to matching the Bush campaign in experience in general elections. Much the same group that brought us the two Reagan campaigns is directing Bush—minus Michael Deaver, the former close aide to the Reagans who was sentenced this week for perjury in connection with his lobbying activities after he left the White House. (He received a hundred-thousand-dollar fine and was sentenced to three years' probation and was required to perform community service.) But the Bush campaign officials have absorbed everything Deaver taught them about backdrops and camera angles, and it places at least as much emphasis as Reagan's did on the picture that will be presented on the television news programs. This election has come to be as dependent on the image as music video—and about as deep. Thoughtful speeches are still occasionally given (mainly by Dukakis), but there is limited payoff. They receive little coverage on the news programs. If there is an attack line in the speech, that is what will make the news. More than ever, it seems, the contest for who will govern us for the next four years has come down to one over "sound bites" and pictures.

The arrival in August of Baker as the chairman of the Bush campaign has given it a discipline it had been lacking, and set its tone. Lee Atwater, the campaign manager, is well known for his combative approach, his willingness to do things that others might balk at, and Baker has backed him. The Bush campaign, through its

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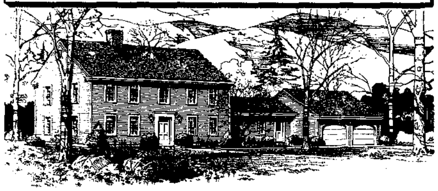

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"negative research" on Dukakis, found the Pledge veto last spring, and Bush advisers say that when it was mentioned to Bush in a meeting late last spring he recognized it as a good issue, and that when Bush started to talk about the Pledge and the furlough he began to do better in the polls. But these issues were controversial within the Bush camp and didn't come into heavy use until the Republican Convention. An associate of Atwater's said to me recently, "Prior to Baker, every time Lee wanted to toss a grenade others in the campaign would say it wasn't a real issue, it didn't have a life to it, it didn't fit with our themes of peace and prosperity, that the press would bang us on it—no one was particularly encouraging. Baker is much more offensive-oriented, and no one will try to go around him to the Vice-President, the way others did to Lee before." When Baker officially came to the campaign (he had, of course, been in close touch with it all along), he believed that the Pledge, crime, and gun-control issues had a lot of juice left in them and could be used very effectively in ads.

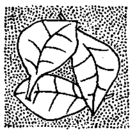
The Bush people believe that they have hit upon a formula for making negative campaigning acceptable: from time to time, Bush will give a "positive" speech, or within a speech attacking Dukakis he will say something about what he is for. This way, when criticized for negative campaigning they say that it is "comparative," and point to the "positive" things Bush has said. (The subtlety seems to have been lost on, among others, Barry Goldwater, who, in the course of introducing Dan Quayle at an event in Arizona this week, said, "I want you to go back and tell George Bush to start talking about the issues.") Thus, every once in a while Bush will repeat his acceptance-speech line about wanting a "kinder, gentler nation," or give a little inspirational speech. After touring the flag factory, Bush, standing in front of an enormous flag, said, "What's the end purpose of this economic growth? Is it just to be rich? What a shallow ambition." (The previous day, Dukakis had criticized Bush for offering "a warmed-over call to selfishness." Bush had said that Dukakis had "pursued a strategy of dividing Americans" by class and region. Actually, the Dukakis people had hoped to make more of the class issue than they have.) Bush also said he was "haunted" by the thought of children who grow up "amidst the violence and horror" of the inner cities. He also said that "flag sales are doing well and America is doing well." The previous week he had said that flag sales had dropped under Carter and increased under Reagan.

Baker's propensity for cutting losses was on display when, in early September, he forced the resignation of Frederic Malek as deputy chairman of the Republican National Committee. Malek was one of those odd personnel choices that Bush makes on occasion (Quayle): despite the fact that Malek was well known as Nixon's "hatchet man" when he served as his personnel director, and despite the fact that he had no real training for the job, Bush picked him to run the Republican Convention. This was among other things another example of Bush's vindictiveness: two experienced Republicans who had run previous Conventions were ruled out because they had supported Robert Dole for the Republican nomination. Following a report, on Sunday, September 11th, in the Washington *Post*, that Malek had, at Nixon's request, made a count of the number of Jews at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which had been disagreeing with Nixon's rosy economic reports, Baker got Malek to resign at once rather than become a political liability. (Malek told the New York *Times* that weekend that he had also made a list of their names. Two B.L.S. officials were removed from their jobs, but Malek said that he had had nothing to do with that.) Bush, who apparently didn't get the point, called Malek "a most honorable man." (The Bush campaign also had to get rid of seven members of its advisory coalition of ethnics because of past, or even recent, alleged anti-Semitic activities.)

By running the kind of campaign he did, Bush succeeded in driving up Dukakis's "negatives"—measured by the number of poll respondents who say they view a candidate unfavorably—and his own down, to the point where the two men were about even on this score going into the first debate. (The Dukakis people used to set great store by Bush's high negatives.) Unhappily for the Dukakis campaign, Bush had managed not only to erase Dukakis's substantial lead of earlier this summer (much of which was caused by Dukakis's success at the Democratic Convention) but to maintain most of his own post-Convention lead by campaigning continuously following the Convention (all but one day between the Convention and Labor Day), and started out on Labor Day slightly ahead. The Dukakis people had hoped to start out at least even. (Dukakis's lead in the summer wasn't really as strong as the seventeen-point difference between him and Bush suggested: half the respondents, when asked what they really liked about Dukakis, couldn't say.) In early September, Lee Atwater told me that he'd always thought that "three things would come into focus after Labor Day that would help us." These were, he said, that the issues of peace and prosperity would come onto the agenda to a greater extent, that Reagan would enjoy a rise in popularity, and that the Republicans' base in the Electoral College would firm up—that the states which had been voting Republican in recent elections would return to the Republican fold. To a greater or lesser extent, all of these things have happened. Some (but not all) Southern states, which seemed up for grabs when Dukakis was ahead earlier this summer, are back in the Republican column, and Bush is comfortably ahead in Florida. Quietly, the Dukakis people have decided to not allocate further resources to Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Virginia. Bush is slightly ahead in Texas and Ohio, while California and most of the other industrial states are close, as is Missouri. (The candidates' itineraries give clues as to which states are close.) The candidates are also about even in Washington and Oregon—and the Dukakis camp thinks it is ahead in the usually Republican Montana and Colorado. The Bush camp has sent a barrage of advertising at California, Texas, and Ohio in the hope of locking up all three states early, but the strategy has not been completely successful as yet. But the Dukakis people had managed to arrest their candidate's slide by mid-September, and, going into the debate, Bush has not put the election away.

Another line of attack the Bush campaign intends to pursue—despite

Bush's own vulnerabilities on the subject—is the environment. Bush's approach to this issue in early September was a model of the form his campaign has developed. First, standing on the shore of Lake Erie, he gave a "positive" speech, declaring himself an environmentalist, and saying that he would go further than the Reagan Administration to protect the environment. This wouldn't take much. (Actually, Bush had said many of the same things before, in May, but that speech had received little attention.) The next day, Bush went boating in Boston Harbor and assailed Dukakis for his inaction in cleaning it up (Dukakis was vulnerable on this point), and on the following day Bush appeared on the New Jersey coast and said that Dukakis had proposed dumping sewage from Massachusetts off New Jersey. (To demonstrate the threat to sea life, Bush held up a crab, which bit him.) What with the washing up of hospital waste on Eastern coasts, and signs that the long-predicted "greenhouse effect" (the warming of the earth's temperature as a result of the trapping of heat by gases created by fossil fuels) is coming to pass—this summer's drought is taken as a sign—environmental issues are back on the map. But, while both candidates talk about the environment, neither of them has proposed the hard measures that many people feel need to be taken: among other things a far stricter fuel-efficiency standard for automobiles, and a gasoline tax. (This would also help reduce the budget and trade deficits.) Dukakis has assailed Bush for taking contradictory positions on offshore drilling in California—an important issue in that state—and for attempting in the early years of the Reagan Administration to reduce certain environmental regulations; he has also been highly critical of the Reagan Administration's environmental record. But the Bush people say that Dukakis is also vulnerable on the filling in of wetlands for development projects in Massachusetts, and one Bush aide says, "Mark my words. By the end of the election, we're going to take the environmental issue away from him."



Using distorted statistics, Bush has attacked Dukakis's record in Massachusetts, which is neither as good as Dukakis says it is nor as bad as Bush says it is. Dukakis has run into fiscal difficulties this year and in a Cromwellian move this fall tried, without success, to keep the rambunctious state legislature from meeting before the election. (The state senate is in session.) Dukakis may have said that "this election is not about ideology, it's about competence," but Bush is trying to paint him as an ideologue and raise questions about his competence. To keep the upper hand on the questions of peace and prosperity Bush has kept up the attack on Dukakis on defense issues, charging, incorrectly, that Dukakis opposes every new weapons system, and warning of the perils of allowing the Democrats to once again manage the economy. The Bush campaign arranged for Bush to be seen witnessing the destruction of the first American missile under the treaty to reduce intermediate-range nuclear missiles (I.N.F.), in Karnack, Texas, following which, Bush, in Tyler, with cowgirls arrayed behind him, said that Dukakis would give away strategic-weapons systems "and he asks for nothing in return." While Dukakis has opposed both a mobile MX system and the Midgetman, a mobile single-warhead missile, Bush goes too far. He says that Dukakis "has opposed every new weapons system since the slingshot." He has described himself as "on the American side" of certain issues, leaving the listener to draw the obvious conclusion.

Both candidates are, of course, trying to define the economy in terms that best suit their own purposes. And each one has points on his side: Bush can point to a rise in the median family income (ten per cent) since 1981; Dukakis can say that that rise has largely been caused by women entering the work force to produce two-earner families in order to make ends meet. Bush can point to the drop in interest rates and inflation under Reagan; Dukakis can point to the slow growth of earnings in those years. Bush often points to the fact that seventeen million new jobs have been created under Reagan, but the growth in jobs on an annual basis was greater under Carter than it has been under Reagan. He has said, "Expansions don't die from old age, they die from bad policies." One set of poll figures the Dukakis people watch is the percentage of people who think the country is on the right track or the wrong track economically. It

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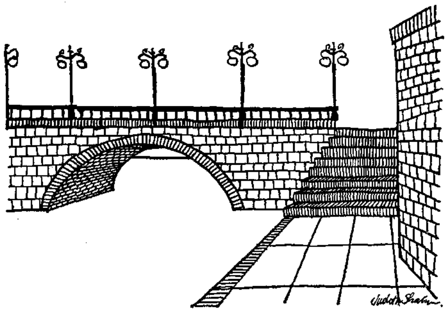
was with uneasiness that the Dukakis people saw the result—right track—going very much in Bush's favor this fall.

The Bush people are obviously nervous about Quayle—who gives them much to be nervous about. Various polls and focus-group interviews indicate that people are uneasy about Bush's selection of Quayle as his running mate. (A recent *Wall Street Journal*/NBC News poll found that by more than three to two voters said that Bush had made a "bad choice," and by more than two to one they said that Lloyd Bentsen would make a better President.) In Quayle's campaigning, his inexperience and uncertainty, as well as his immaturity, keep peeking around the figure his assigned managers are trying to make him be—and sometimes they come into full view. When he departs from his script, it is usually disastrous. An attempt to show his defense "expertise" by allowing him to speak from note cards was not at all successful (among other things, he cites one of Tom Clancy's best-selling military-adventure novels as a basis for his defense positions), and he got himself into an awful mess when, at one of his very few press conferences, he tried to answer a question about the Holocaust. He said, "It was an obscene period in our nation's history," and, when called on for that, said, "Not our nation's but in World War II. I mean we all lived in this century. I didn't live in this century but in this century's history." Throughout this exchange, Quayle looked rattled and terrified. Quayle's assigned role is to take on Dukakis, but the way he does so is often sophomoric. (He said Dukakis had lost his "top naval adviser. His rubber ducky drowned in the bathtub.") Though the National Guard issue has gone away, questions about Quayle's past continue to surface. (His financial report indicated that he was not likely to directly inherit a share of the assets of his family's large trust. But he could inherit large sums from his relatives.) On September 9th, the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* reported that he had got into the Indiana University Law School, after first being rejected because of low college grades, under a program that was designed to help minorities and economically disadvantaged students. (For some reason, Quayle's college and law-school records have not been released.) Quayle has taken to comparing himself to such late bloomers as Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Winston Churchill.

NEITHER Dukakis nor his campaign organization was prepared for what came at them following the Republican Convention. The new Bush took them, like almost everyone else, by surprise; they had been counting on the awkward misspeaker, the Yalie who would ask a waitress at a truck stop for "just a splash" of coffee and could come off as a weakling. (A big premise of the Dukakis campaign had been that Dukakis would come off the stronger of the two men.) Like a number of others, they had thought that such issues as the Pledge and the furlough program were played out and would be seen as irrelevant to a Presidential campaign. As the Bush people had figured, Dukakis and his campaign were unprepared for the rigors of a general election—and certainly for the kind of all-out onslaught that the Bush people would make. There is a great deal of difference between a nomination contest and a general-election contest, and few who have not gone through a general election are prepared for it: the demands are far greater and the pressures far more brutal. Even the logistical requirements are of a different order. Holding an event in the wrong kind of hall, or failing to seal off an event to hecklers—both of these things happened to the Dukakis campaign in the first days of the fall campaign—can ruin the story a campaign had hoped to get on that night's television news. A misstatement on the part of the candidate becomes a very big thing. The Dukakis campaign started out the general election with very few people who had been through a general election before—up and down the ranks. Even John Sasso, whom Dukakis brought back in just before Labor Day, to try to arrest his slide in the polls and get his campaign on an even keel, has worked in only one general-election campaign—that of Geraldine Ferraro four years ago.



The largest problem the Dukakis campaign faced as the fall campaign began was the candidate himself. In the two weeks following the Republican Convention, and for much of the time in September, leading up to the debate, Dukakis behaved very strangely. In August, at his insistence, he was spending time in western Massachusetts, as he does each year. (As it happens, he may have needed to spend time there, because some Massachusetts polls showed Bush nearly tied with Dukakis in the state.) During the August period, we frequently saw Dukakis standing before a blue curtain (in contrast to the interesting pictures of Bush), and he was available to the press nearly every day, often responding to inquiries about one or another of Bush's charges—and the response, usually a defensive one, would be the Dukakis story on the evening news. Dukakis, of course, should have understood this—that controlling the agenda is a principal goal in Presidential politics—and kept to the subject he wanted to talk about, if he had any. To the surprise of the Bush people, among others, what thrusts he made at Bush were often lame. And sometimes they misfired. It was during this time that Dukakis offered his constitutionally based rebuttal to Bush on the Pledge of Allegiance—an action that all his aides deny having had anything to do with. It is now accepted as a given that in the course of a political campaign there is no point in basing an argument on the Constitution. On the Saturday before Labor Day, we saw Dukakis, obviously on the defensive, appearing at Ellis Island with his wife and his mother, and, with the Statue of Liberty in the background, leading the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance. (The Dukakis campaign had wanted to start out Labor Day at Ellis Island, but the Bush people had already booked it for Quayle. On Labor Day, Quayle toured Ellis Island and, at the Statue of Liberty, explained to the crowd the Pledge of Allegiance and, referring to Dukakis's veto, said that the "mind-set that would impede the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance is the same mind-set that could well sterilize public education of its proper role as a transmitter of the values and standards upon which we must rely, and which have been central throughout our his-

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tory.") Dukakis's charge, in Texas in early September, that Bush's attacks on him about the Pledge smacked of McCarthyism was considered by many—including the Bush people—as too "élitist" to be widely understood. A great many people wondered why Dukakis didn't haul off and let Bush have it in a way that everyone would understand for questioning his patriotism. This gets back to Dukakis's instincts. For a man who has been in politics for some time, he shows a curious lack of political instinct—of spontaneity, of knowing just what to do at the right moment, of feel. A President must have feel—but it's not clear that either candidate for President has it. (Lloyd Bentsen, Dukakis's running mate, has feel, and has turned out to be a very competent campaigner. But that won't have made much difference if Dukakis loses Texas—as the Bush people predict he will.)

98¢
YOUR CHOICE

For much of this period, Dukakis has looked glum, even grim. He rarely smiles, and definitely has not looked as if he were having a good time. Campaigns are gruelling, but the candidate must show a certain joie de vivre, zest for the game; if he doesn't, he's not likely to attract a strong following, or go over very well as President. The visage that Dukakis has largely been showing on our television screens (try watching with the sound off) has not been one that would be very welcome night after night for four years. Aides say that this grim expression stemmed from the fact that Dukakis was tired, that he had been overscheduled. While the latter is apparently true (his schedule, which had been far more demanding than Bush's, has been cut back), one wonders. Dukakis, after all, has been telling us all year that he is the marathon runner, the one who will pace himself until he prevails—and during the primaries he seemed such a man. Several of Dukakis's traits that seem to be putting many people off now were apparent all along: his lack of humor, his arrogance (the any-fool-knows-this expression); there had seemed something grim about him all along; and it was clear some time ago that there was a question of how well he would wear—whether before or after the election. Even if Dukakis has been tired, or unhappy about the political fix he was in in early September, one wonders about his lack of discipline—he seemed either uninterested in even trying to pretend he was enjoying himself, or unable to do so. Politicians, like other performers, often feel a lot worse than they let on, but they do what they have to. We want zest in our politicians: Harry S. Truman showed zest: even the aging Reagan shows zest in most of his public performances. From time to time in the primaries (and certainly in his acceptance speech), Dukakis has shown some zest.

Dukakis's advisers—at least those who can talk to him this way—have implored him to smile when he is before the cameras. He has held two or three rallies where he turned in a strong and cheerful performance, but those have been the exception. One Dukakis adviser says, "There's nothing about his mood that a turnaround in the polls won't change." But how would he react, before or after the election, if things went badly for him again?

In early September, Dukakis was aware that he was stumbling around. Rarely a good listener, he wasn't very interested in the advice his campaign people had for him. And the campaign people were worried about the situation. A Dukakis adviser said to me in early September, "He's so lifeless. I would almost say he's a quitter if I didn't know better." In the primaries, he had at least run as an optimist, and though he was still uttering an optimistic line from time to time, his demeanor did not bespeak optimism. In an appearance at a fund-raiser in New York on September 8th, he succeeded in depressing a large percentage of the crowd by talking glumly about the difficult days of the campaign ("There will be good days and not so good days; there will be good polls and not so good polls"), and in Washington the following week he left a large dinner gathering of Democrats in lower spirits than before his brief appearance. It's a strange thing when a candidate doesn't understand that he is supposed to—or can't—rally the troops. Dukakis's own understanding that he was in serious trouble was what led him to bring back John Sasso as vice-chairman of his campaign. There was widespread relief within the campaign about Sasso's return, because everyone understood that he could talk to the candidate, to whom he is very close, in a way that no one else could.

Since Sasso's return, the candidate's performance has begun to improve—but there is still a long way to go. Quite a bit of overhauling of the campaign's support structure has gone on: more experienced advance people, schedulers, speechwriters, and people who could deal with issues were brought in. (Among the new speechwriters is Theodore Sorensen, who wrote for John F. Kennedy.) Like Bush when Baker took over, Dukakis felt less compelled to involve himself in the details of the campaign, and as he grew more confident of the support structure beneath him he began to improve as a candidate. But many of his appearances were still flat. Sasso felt that if Dukakis's downward slide weren't halted he could be behind by large double digits in October, and then it would be impossible to get his message out, because the topic would be how badly he was doing and why wasn't he doing better and so on. Sasso also had a blunt meeting in New York in early September with Jesse Jackson, who had been less than helpful to Dukakis, and since then Jackson's advice has been solicited more, and he has begun to bestir himself on Dukakis's behalf. (He has cut spots for black-oriented radio stations and made appearances for Dukakis and the Democratic Party's voter-registration drive.)

In order to shore up Dukakis's candidacy, an effort was made to present him in more interesting settings (with as few "press availabilities" as possible), and give a series of substantive speeches that would both get him off the defensive and flesh out his message. This was also an attempt to portray Dukakis as substantive—in contrast to Bush. The attempt to rival the Bush people at offering interesting pictures for television backfired, of course, in the now famous episode of Dukakis riding around in a tank. (This followed a foreign-policy speech, but took most of the attention away from what he had to say.) In the tank, Dukakis looked as a Presidential candidate never should—ridiculous. The large helmet on his large head (but small body) and his droopy face made him look like Snoopy. The campaign sent him into Yellowstone National Park to view the damage from the extensive

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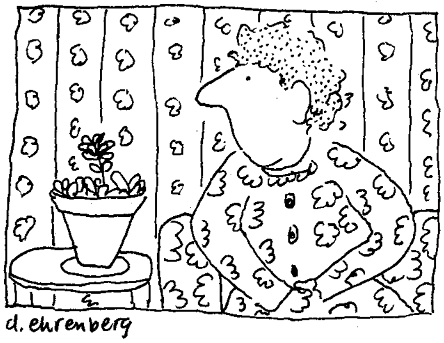
fires that had been raging there, but Dukakis had nothing to say. He spoke to some of the people who had been fighting the fire for weeks, but avoided taking a position on the controversial question of whether the National Park Service had erred in sticking for some time to its policy of letting naturally occurring fires burn.

To "inoculate" Dukakis against further charges that he was unschooled in foreign policy or "weak" on defense, his campaign arranged for him to give speeches on these subjects three days in a row, starting at the beginning of the second week in September. The speeches dealt with the United States' role in the world, with relations with the Soviet Union, and with defense policy. To the distress of some Dukakis advisers, a fair percentage of the first speech was an attack on Bush (for failing in his assignments to deal with terrorism and drugs)—which got much of the attention on the news programs. It also contained a dig at Bush's choice of Quayle, whom Dukakis chooses to call by his formal name: "I want a real war against drugs; his answer to drug kingpins like Noriega is J. Danforth Quayle." (Bush has said he would put his Vice-President in charge of the anti-drug policy, as he had been.) He also said, as he has before, that he might attack terrorists' base camps—something even the Reagan Administration considered too risky, with the exception of Libya. In his second speech, Dukakis criticized Bush for not—unlike himself and Reagan—seeing in Mikhail Gorbachev an opportunity for a new relationship with the Soviet Union. (Bush has expressed more skepticism.) Some of his proposals seemed more thought through than others, but again his attacks on Bush and Quayle—plus the picture of him riding in the tank—were what made the news. The third speech, given at Georgetown University, repeated, with slightly more emphasis, Dukakis's support of the Stealth bomber and the Trident II D5 sea-based missile and his support of a new cruise missile—to counteract Bush's charge that he opposes all new weapons systems. Echoing the views of Sam Nunn, one of the authorities on defense Dukakis had met with before the speech, he criticized the idea of basing MX missiles on railroad cars as being strategically unsound—rather than, as before, too costly. This time, he bowed toward the "strategic concept" of the Midgetman missile (which is favored by Nunn and House Armed Services Committee chairman Les Aspin) but continued to criticize it as too costly. For some reason, Dukakis won't come out for a new single-warhead land-based missile (not necessarily mobile) favored by many Democrats, though his aides have said he might favor such a weapon. Nor will he attach his name to the very interesting proposal—proffered by Nunn, among others—to move the world away from multiple-warhead missiles to single-warhead ones, which could provide more stability. In his Georgetown speech, Dukakis once again championed some costly new conventional-warfare weapons. (His espousal of more spending on conventional defense has always seemed a bit of protective coloration, a camouflage of his opposition to a number of strategic weapons. His proposal to place more emphasis on conventional and less on strategic weaponry makes a number of serious defense experts —and a lot of Europeans—nervous.) In not offering any proposal to deal with the land-based leg of the strategic triad (but, his aides point out, at least conceding that something may have to be done about it), Dukakis was in the same position as Bush, who supports both the MX and the Midgetman but concedes that there won't be the money for both. In his speech, Dukakis also backed away from his sudden embrace of S.D.I. the week before, in the course of a press conference following a speech on defense. Dukakis's statements then were inconsistent with what he had said before and with each other. He also made no mention in his Georgetown speech of a ban on flight-testing of missiles, which he has said he supports—but which could prevent the development of new missiles. The major problem with Dukakis's speech at Georgetown was that he had to give it at all. By the time he did, he was on the defensive on the subject of defense, and the thick of a general-election campaign is a hard place to get complicated thoughts across. Dukakis has paid a price for his predilection for assuming that he knows more than he does and his supreme confidence in himself as a quick study. He should have had the defense subject buttoned down a long time ago.



THE greatest effort on the part of the Dukakis campaign in recent weeks has been on trying to sharpen and flesh out Dukakis's central theme: that he is the candidate who best understands the needs and concerns of the middle class, and the one best qualified to deal with them. It's a complicated message, because it requires convincing people that they are not as well off as Bush says they are, and playing to their anxieties about the future without being the candidate of "doom and gloom." The Dukakis campaign has gone at this in various ways. In late August, it tried out the theme of "Bring prosperity home"—but one problem with that was that it accepted that Reagan had created prosperity. The idea was to work on people's concern that America is losing its economic primacy to Japan, that our economy is dependent on foreign investment, and that jobs have been going overseas. At one point, Dukakis elaborated on his mantra of "good jobs at good wages" by adding, "in the good old U.S.A."—but that didn't bring down the house, either. He has talked about what his campaign calls "the middle-class squeeze," but it's a complicated (for campaigns) concept. In the past couple of weeks, there has been an accelerated and disciplined effort to show Dukakis as the candidate talking about programs that would help the middle class (the poor, who are out of fashion these days, get a few crumbs), portray him as the candidate of change, as the person best qualified to handle the next period of people's lives—and draw the contrast with Bush. (Bush has countered with coming out for a day-care program, endorsing the idea of parental leave, and supporting an increase in the minimum wage—but he has as yet spent little time on these subjects. Dukakis has endorsed a Democratic bill, pending in Congress, to require companies to give parents unpaid time off in cases of birth or serious illness of a child. He has also endorsed an increase in the minimum wage and "the concept of" a Democratic-sponsored day-care bill pending in Congress.) The model, says a Dukakis adviser, was this past Tuesday, the day Bush visited the flag factory, when Dukakis unveiled a universal-health-care program and also said, "Mr. Bush, don't you think it's time you came out from behind that flag and told us what you intend to do to provide basic health care for thirty-seven million of our fellow-citizens?" The program, modelled on one Dukakis had started in Massachusetts, which required employers to provide health insurance for their employees, was a little wobbly, as was a college student-loan program he had offered two weeks earlier, but they succeeded in portraying Dukakis as offering concrete proposals. (Dukakis made other health proposals that same week.) In featuring these programs, the Dukakis people were trying to force a change in the agenda—get it off of Bush's issues and onto Dukakis's. At the same time, there has been more focus on hitting back at Bush right away—as with the rival police supporters. Plans are in the works to go at Bush even harder after the debate—in Dukakis's appearances and in the campaign's advertising. Dukakis plans to hit at Bush on Noriega, and to go at him for casting the tiebreaking vote in the Senate, in 1985, in favor of a Republican-sponsored budget proposal that would have, among other things, reduced the cost-of-living allowances under Social Security. Bush's was a responsible vote for a real attempt to lower the budget deficit—but Reagan later pulled the rug out from under the Senate Republicans by walking away from the Social Security cuts, which he had originally supported. Dukakis has frequently singled out programs that would have been cut in the Republican proposal and slammed at Bush for voting for the cuts. This is somewhat unfair (though a common Democratic practice)—and won't encourage politicians to cast brave votes in the future. There is also to be more emphasis in the coming period on the theme that America is losing its competitive edge—Dukakis began to move toward this in the past week, in a speech in Little Rock, Arkansas (though he didn't mention Japan specifically). The Little Rock speech was his most effective one yet in describing himself as the champion of the middle class, and it had familiar Sorensen touches ("unless we can get this country moving again"), and optimism. But the speech received only a brief mention on that night's network-news programs.

A big challenge the Dukakis camp faces going into the first debate is that polling indicates that people know little about him, that—not surprisingly—they find him vague. It will take some time for the picture of him as offering proposals to sink in, if it does, but movement in the polls since Labor Day also suggests that what Dukakis has been doing has helped him. Much of what people knew about Dukakis is what Bush has said about him. Therefore there was the big effort to lay out programs, and there will be a big effort, in the debate and afterward, to present Dukakis in a more favorable light—to get people to like him more and have confidence in him. The Dukakis campaign's internal polls, like the public ones, have shown the race tightening again. A couple of weeks ago, the Dukakis campaign had its candidate behind Bush by twelve points and dropping—now it has him only four points behind, though some Dukakis people think the real difference is more like six points. (This is similar to what public polls are showing.) So Dukakis, who is a very determined man, has another shot at this election, but also a large challenge.

September 29

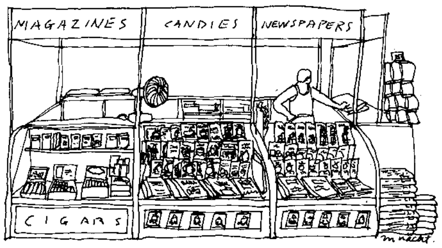
Sunday night's debate was very much a reflection of the two candidates' campaigns, but it also offered people a sense of the two men. Deprived of a script, Bush was at times confused and squeaky; Dukakis was only partly successful in his effort to project a warmer image. Though both men were on the surface polite—barely—the nasty undertone of the campaign was present on the stage. The debate, sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates, a group representing the two parties, and held at Wake Forest University, in Winston-Salem, and the first of two between the candidates (Bentsen and Quayle will meet next week), came off as more of a debate than the format, employing a panel of journalists to ask the questions, might have led to. (The format, and that there will be only two debates and that the debates are being held during the Olympics and the culmination of the baseball season, were all the handiwork of Baker, who bested Dukakis's campaign chairman, Paul Brountas, on just about every issue concerning the debates. Baker had the advantage of being able to at least appear not to care whether there were any debates at all, but still most people think he outnegotiated Brountas.) Debates have played too large a role in Presidential elections: the buildup is tremendous (like everything else, it grows from election to election), the campaigns come to a virtual halt before them, and judgments about who "won" (which shouldn't be made at all) are often based on highly superficial criteria. (For example, Reagan's prepared one-liner to Carter, "There you go again.") Perhaps if there were more of them, any one of them would not carry so much weight. One of the concessions Baker won was that the second, and last, debate would occur more than three weeks before the election (so that a slip by Bush would not be too large a factor on Election Day); though Baker did this out of concern for his own man, it's also better for the country.

Perhaps because news commentators recognized the distortions that one-liners had been allowed to cause in the past, and because the one-liners this time were so obviously contrived, the commentary after the debate refrained from placing much emphasis on them. Bush had more of them, and since there had been so much talk before the debate about how Roger Ailes would supply Bush with one-liners—as he had during the primaries—they were seen for what they were. Among Bush's were "I had hoped that this would have been a little friendlier evening. I'd wanted to hitchhike a ride home in his tank with him" and "That answer was about as clear as Boston Harbor." (Bush preceded this one by saying, "Is this the time to unleash our one-liners?") Dukakis, for his part, referring to Bush's budget proposals, said, "If he keeps this up, he's going to be the Joe Isuzu of American politics."

Fortunately, there was little judging of who had "won" on the part of the commentators immediately afterward—in part because there was no obvious "winner" and in part because of wise restraint. (ABC, to its discredit, did an instant poll.) The two candidates actually did debate a number of the issues of the campaign and if they broke little new ground (a debate is no place to take big risks) they offered the viewer a pretty full *tour d'horizon* of the campaign thus far. Though pressed to do so, neither man offered a realistic plan for reducing the deficit. (Bush failed to rebut a Dukakis suggestion that he would cut Social Security.) Dukakis talked a lot about programs he is offering and programs he sponsored in Massachusetts, while Bush continued to try to paint Dukakis as a big-spending liberal whose "values" (a word Bush used a lot) place him "out there on, out of the mainstream." Bush asked, "Do we want this country to go that far left?" Bush brought up Dukakis's membership in the A.C.L.U., pointing out that it wants to get rid of the ratings system for movies ("I don't want my ten-year-old grandchild to go into an X-rated movie") and remove the tax exemption of religious institutions (Bush mentioned only the Catholic church). At this point, Bush said, "I think I'm more in touch with the mainstream of America." There was nothing subtle about his approach. He also, defensively, brought up the Pledge issue, saying he was not questioning Dukakis's patriotism, and Dukakis, of course, was ready. (Bush must have known he would be.) This time, Dukakis replied more along the lines many people thought he should have all along: "Of course the Vice-President's questioning my patriotism. . . . And I resent it." And he went on to talk about his immigrant parents, who "taught me that this was the greatest country in the world. I'm in public service because I love this country." This had obviously been rehearsed—it seemed that almost everything was—and Dukakis appeared indignant, but not impassioned, about the point. He then went on to offer a cheap shot of his own, pointing out that Bush has presided over the Senate for the past seven and a half years and "he's never once suggested that a session of the Senate begin with the Pledge of Allegiance." (A number of people, including some in the Dukakis camp, question whether Dukakis's emphasis on being the son of immigrants is completely helpful; they suggest—and some data back them up—that a lot of people resent and fear waves of immigrants; and there is also some simple prejudice against ethnics.) Bush also, inevitably, brought up Willie Horton (though a great many people don't yet know who he is, and Bush didn't identify him), and said, "I am not going to furlough men like Willie Horton, and"—and this caught one's attention—"I would meet with the victims of his last escapade, the rape and the brutalization of the family down there in Maryland." (The Bush campaign has considered such a meeting.)

Bush also made reference a few times to the expression "a thousand points of light," which had sounded good (if like Reagan) in his acceptance speech, though its meaning was unclear. By the time Bush got done with the debate, the thousand points of light stood for help for the homeless, for help for inner-city children, and for private schools and private church schools helping with education. Asked about having said that he was "haunted" by the lives of inner-city children, Bush denied that the Reagan Administration had cut programs that would help them—and said that he favored the program that provides nutrition and medical help to pregnant women and young children (the Reagan Administration made several attempts to cut the program, which is estimated to serve only half the women and children who need it). Dukakis hit Bush on the Administration's attempts to cut programs, and added, "Being haunted, a thousand points of light—I don't know what that means. I know what strong political leadership is."

Dukakis was on the offensive for most of the debate and was clearly the better debater—quicker on his feet. He was, as usual, composed and controlled. While aggressive, he stayed just this side of unpleasant (which he had been in some of the debates during the primaries), but his persona still was not entirely pleasing. Still, his being there at all, going toe to toe with the Vice-President (whom, in a levelling move, he called "George" from time to time), had to help him, give him more authority. The first debate usually helps the challenger in this respect. (Bush, for his part, said of Dukakis, "Wouldn't it be nice to be the ice man so you never make a mistake?" He was trying to be like Reagan—the nice guy who may not always get things right, but, shucks.) Dukakis went at Bush hard about Noriega (in this case somewhat unfairly) and the Iran-Contra affair—using these issues to question Bush's credentials and his judgment. The Bush people had gone to great lengths to play down Bush's debating abilities, though Bush had done rather well in the primaries—better than he did Sunday night. He was not as shrill and herky-jerky as he had been against Geraldine Ferraro four years ago, but he was frequently struggling with words and sentences, and at one point lost his place and couldn't improvise. One could see him struggling to get out the thoughts and sentences his advisers had stuffed into him. Bush came off as the warmer man—because he is. One could almost see the effort Dukakis made, at times successfully, to come across as warmer (though his occasional smiles seemed forced) and a man of more feeling than he usually seems to be—and on occasion he lapsed into the dry didact. (He was decked out in a better suit than usual, with firm shoulder pads for a change.) When he was asked about his "passionless, technocratic" style, Dukakis replied, with some—but not a great deal of—feeling, "I care deeply about people, all people," and then he went on to list the kinds of people he cares about (the ones who don't yet benefit from his programs). If he has to describe his passion, to assert that he has it, he has a problem.

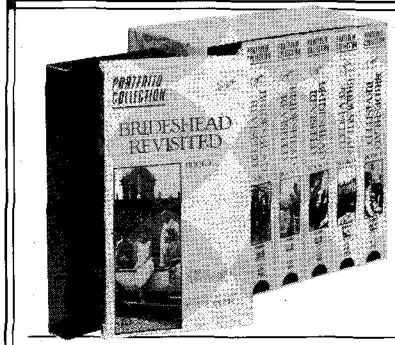


Both men were on thin ice on defense policy. Dukakis recited his list of weapons that he is for, and came out flatly against the MX and the Midgetman, and made no mention of any need to modernize land-based nuclear forces. He lapsed into his old litany about the Reagan Administration, and Bush, wanting to "spend billions and billions on Star Wars"—a system that he said "makes no sense at all." Bush responded by asking rhetorically why Dukakis, who did say again that he would spend a billion dollars on research for S.D.I., is "willing to spend a dime on something that you consider a fantasy and a fraud." Bush denied that he has been inconsistent about whether he wanted to deploy S.D.I. (he has been), and said, “When it is deployable, I will deploy it.” But Bush got mixed up when he was talking about land-based missiles. Acknowledging that “tough choices” would have to be made, he said, “We are going to make some changes and some tough choices before we go to deployment on the Midgetman missile or on the Minuteman [another land-based missile], whatever it is. We’re going to have to, the MX, MX, we’re going to have to do that.” Realizing that he was in trouble, Bush—alluding to a joke that has been going around about his having advanced the date of Pearl Harbor by three months and the fact that the debate was on September 25th—paused and said, “It’s Christmas. It’s Christmas.” The joke had it that Bush had pulled out of the September 25th debate because he wanted to be with his family on Christmas. Viewers who did not know the joke must have been puzzled by Bush’s behavior. And, asked what weapons systems he would cut, he replied by naming three that had already been dropped. (In a debate in the primaries, Bush had been confused about the terms of the I.N.F. treaty.) Especially for a man of his experience, Bush is curiously uninformed. Bush also became rattled in answering a question about Quayle: meaning to say that there were three people in the race who understand defense issues, he said, “There are three people on our ticket that are knowledgeable in the race, knowledgeable in defense, and Dan Quayle is one of them.” Bush indignantly chided Dukakis for calling Quayle “J. Danforth Quayle,” tried to say that Quayle had been named for a family friend who had been killed in the Second World War—but Bush didn’t get the line right, and it wasn’t clear what he was talking about.

Bush’s closing statement was not outstanding: he meandered through a list of areas the two candidates disagree on, saying, “I am the change,” and said, “In the final analysis, a person goes into that voting booth, they’re going to say, ‘Who has the values I believe in? Who has the experience that we trust?’ ” And, in what seemed to be a sly reminder of the rumors about Dukakis’s mental health that the Bush people had fanned in August, Bush asked, “Who has the integrity and the stability to get the job done?” And he answered his question, “I am that man.” Dukakis’s closing repeated familiar lines about his being a product of the American dream, and a sequence that he had developed in the primaries about “the best America”: “The best America doesn’t hide, we compete. The best America doesn’t waste, we invest. The best America doesn’t leave some of its citizens behind, we bring everybody along. And the best America is not behind us. The best America is yet to come.”

Not everybody in the Dukakis camp thinks this is a great litany, though it is at least optimistic, and there was within some disappointment that Dukakis had not, as it had been planned that he would, talked about himself in terms of the themes that he and his campaign have worked so hard to develop—about himself as the candidate of the average American, and about the need to fight to regain America’s primacy on the world’s economic stage. There was a feeling that he had been too much programs and not enough warmth. Within the Bush camp, it was understood that the Vice-President had not been at his best, and that he needed to talk more about programs of concern to middle-class Americans—which Dukakis was talking about. But, of course, each camp insisted that its man had done splendidly.

ON the day after the debate, both sides declared victory and sent their candidates out to establish and perpetuate “momentum” from the debate. At the same time, they took steps to limit some of the damage to their man in the debate. Baker, in a sign that he thought the matter was important, met with reporters that morning and said that Bush concluded after meeting with his staff that he didn’t think women should be treated as criminals if they received an illegal abortion. Bush had been asked during the debate about penalties and replied, “I haven’t sorted out the penalties, but I do know that I oppose abortion and I favor adoption,” to which Dukakis had responded, “Well, I think what the Vice-President is saying is that he’s prepared to brand a woman a criminal for making this decision.” In the course of that same day, the Dukakis camp decided that it had a problem with the A.C.L.U. matter, to which Dukakis had not responded the night before



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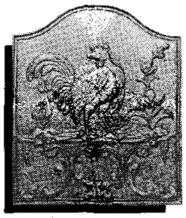

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(his answer had dealt only with the Pledge). One reason it decided that it had this problem was that when Dukakis appeared at a rally in Cleveland, John Glenn told reporters that Dukakis had this problem. So in the course of the day the Dukakis campaign put out a statement listing issues on which Dukakis disagreed with the A.C.L.U.—including, it said, ending the tax-exempt status of the Catholic church, opposing child-pornography laws, and removing the words "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance. (This had been added by Congress in 1954.) It also listed issues on which the A.C.L.U. had opposed Dukakis's actions as Governor. At a rally in New Jersey that night, Dukakis also cited some of these issues and said, of Bush's suggestion that Dukakis agrees with every A.C.L.U. position, "That's nonsense and he knows it." (His rebuttal was deliberately held until after the news programs so that it wouldn't be the Dukakis story.) He listed some of the issues on which he disagrees and said—referring to the A.C.L.U.'s defense of Oliver North's right against self-incrimination—"and I certainly don't support Oliver North."

At a rally in Jackson, Tennessee, that day, Bush—who was appearing with Quayle for the first time since just after the Republican Convention—once again attacked the Democrats' economic record, referred to "big spenders" and "big taxers" out of Massachusetts, and said, "We must never turn our defense over to a liberal governor or a liberal Congress." In the course of an extended football metaphor, Bush said of the Democrats, "They were the fumble and we are the recovery," and, with Quayle by his side, he said, "We cannot gamble with inexperience in that Oval Office." Dukakis, at the Cleveland rally, argued that he was the one in the mainstream and suggested that Bush favored "raiding the Social Security trust fund" in order to reduce the deficit, and took the crowd (which did not seem very worked up) through a litany of issues on which Dukakis charged that Bush had said "Not one word." Among these was health insurance for those who do not have coverage. (Bush had said something vague about allowing people to "buy into" Medicaid.) Dukakis said of Bush, "He sees no challenges, he offers no solutions, and he will lead America nowhere as President of the United States."

Bush followed the next day with a proposal for a tax break for low- and middle-income people who put up to a thousand dollars a year into a special savings account; the Bush and Dukakis people differed over how much this would be worth to the saver, but in any event it wouldn't be very much. (A Bush adviser said that for someone in the twenty-eight-per-cent tax bracket the yield after ten years would be a hundred and forty-five dollars.) The Dukakis camp, which estimated that the saving for that same person over five years would be under twenty dollars, was delighted that Bush gave it an opening, and swung into attack, ridiculing Bush for having said that his proposal would help people "become better able to afford a home, pay for college, or start a business." (On Wednesday, Dukakis held up a twenty-dollar bill as he mocked the proposal.) The Dukakis people felt that Bush was reacting to them—the Bush camp, of course, says that the proposal was in the works for a long time—and also that, for the first time, Bush was on their turf, not talking about Dukakis the liberal. In Illinois on Tuesday, Dukakis, becoming more upbeat and aggressive at last, moved closer to the populist tone his advisers had been seeking, and talked about international economic competition. As the week went on, Bush returned to hitting Dukakis as a liberal, who would appoint liberal judges, and said Dukakis's tax-collection plan would have the I.R.S. harassing people. Dukakis went at Bush on the environment and ethics, calling the Reagan Administration's record a "Hall of Shame." John Sasso says that Dukakis has now "laid the foundation" for his message—but the Dukakis camp knows that the message still needs sharpening. The Dukakis people say, and obviously hope, that the Bush message is thin—is made up, as Sasso puts it, "of manufactured issues." The Bush people think otherwise, and plan variations on their themes. By mid-week following the debate, the Dukakis camp's polling had its man still behind by several points—and the Bush camp had its candidate slightly ahead. We're in for some more weeks of slugging.

—ELIZABETH DREW

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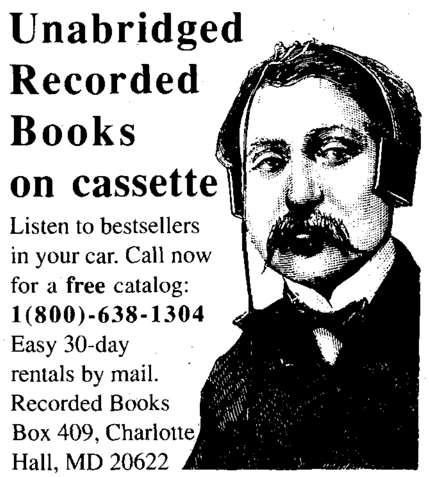
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BOOKS

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

BAD BEHAVIOR, by Mary Gaitskill (Poseidon; $15.95). For anyone whose self-worth has been contingent on accomplishing something in the arts—or just something—these stories will have special recognizability. The thread that runs through them involves moving from a life regulated by humiliation into one where, with difficulty, a human connection not utterly compromised can be achieved. The compromising factor is cruelty, usually of men to women, which the intelligent, well-read, exceptionally percipient women invite, for example by working in brothels while supporting a writing habit. "Connection," on the other hand, about the breakup of a friendship, is a wonderful evocation of a close, non-sexual partnership between young women. In fact, though these stories are about very modern people, they are old-fashioned stories. The author does what few attempt nowadays—a truly stylish but full rendering, undistorted by condescension or special pleading. There is a youthful eagerness to disclose that makes you intimate with these heroines, makes you want to be friends with them.

HOTEL PLENTI, by Miles Gibson (Harper & Row; $17.95). What does one not expect of a novel that begins "Hazel Pope was twelve years old when she first bared her buttocks for biscuits"? Wit rings through clearly in dialogue like "We can't have infants in the house. It's not natural" and in description like "You can't lick a Hercules tongue." (Hercules is a café, the tongue is a cut of meat, and the cook is congratulating himself.) But where first you are won by language you are balked by stitch after dropped stitch. Objects are animated at the expense of character. The author lingers in dithyrambs over food and décor in the dingy café where Hazel Pope deposits her misbegotten son, and later does the same over the less appetizing fare and surroundings of the café's counterpart, the Hotel Plenti, to which the café proprietor transports the hapless young man. The hotel is in mythical Africa; despite the chopping down of jungles and war in Chad, it is essentially Waugh country, without nobs, natives, and also, alas, Waugh. The disappointment is in proportion to the promise.

NOTE: "Stories in an Almost Classical Mode," by Harold Brodkey, has been published by Knopf ($24.95). Many of the stories first appeared in *The New Yorker.*

GENERAL

ADAM, EVE, AND THE SERPENT, by Elaine Pagels (Random House; $17.95). The author of "The Gnostic Gospels" examines the first three chapters of Genesis as a source of Western ideas about sin and sexuality. Her lucid prose demonstrates that to early Christians Adam and Eve's disobedience proved that human beings are free to choose between good and evil, and that our destiny is in our own hands. In the fourth century, however, Augustine, projecting his own struggles with sexuality on the whole human race, focussed upon Adam and Eve's sexuality as the original sin. Although his message was recognized—and challenged—by his contemporaries as a radical departure from Christian orthodoxy, it prevailed, Ms. Pagels thinks, because it justified the need for government at a time when Christianity was no longer a persecuted sect but the state religion of a world empire. This virtuoso study may disquiet some readers and refresh others; the debate it opens is not likely to leave any reader unmoved.

READING THE RIVER, by John Hildebrand (Houghton Mifflin; $17.95). In the summer of 1983, the author set out on a two-month, eighteen-hundred-mile journey by canoe down the Yukon River, from its headwaters, near Whitehorse, to its mouth, in the Bering Sea. Mr. Hildebrand, now an English teacher at the University of Wisconsin, had earlier homesteaded near Fairbanks, Alaska. He is interested in the river, the wildlife, and the people (Indians

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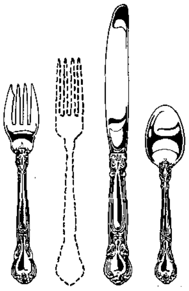

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in Canada, Eskimos in Alaska, and leftover Russian racial mixtures) who fish and trap there, and in the rugged local history, and he has every skill of mind and craft to enfold us in his experience. He writes, "The ghetto blasters that you see everywhere in the villages along the Yukon aren't used to create space, as they are in cities, but to fill it in. Here the country is so immense, so full of space, that it soaks up sound." And "The calm weather of the day before had been only a hole in the net of storms stretched across the delta." A selection of the Literary Guild. Maps.

EDWARD LEAR: SELECTED LETTERS, edited by Vivien Noakes (Oxford; $29.95). Edward Lear (1812-88) was a prodigious correspondent from youth on—this collection begins with a letter written in verse to his adored sister, Ann, when he was thirteen. The letters—written to the Alfred Tennyson family, and his own; to John Ruskin; to the thirteenth Earl of Derby (a valued patron); and to people we can know only through the editor's scrupulous annotations—tell of his development as an artist (he was an ornithological draftsman, and a painter of rather heavy landscapes, many done on commission) and of his travels, to India, Greece, Egypt, the Middle East, and Italy, where he chose to live, because of his hatred of England's weather. Lear's life was shadowed by epilepsy, though few of his friends knew of it. Embellished with his quirky little pen drawings, the letters are alive with fancy and wordplay, and throw off glints of the nonsense that made him famous. He comes over to us as a delightful man.

NOTE: "Post- to Neo-: The Art World of the 1980s," by Calvin Tomkins, has been published by Holt ($19.95). Nearly all the contents originally appeared in *The New Yorker.*

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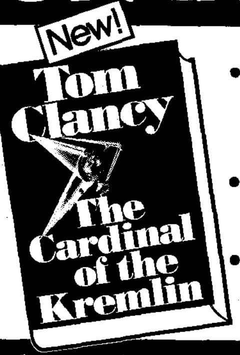
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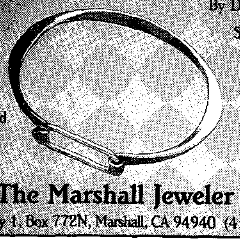

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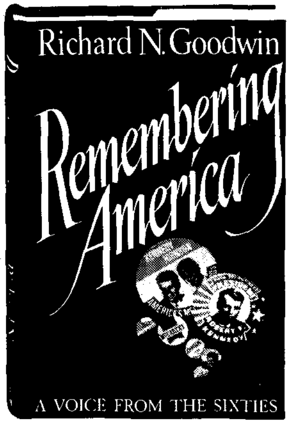
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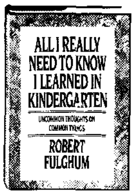
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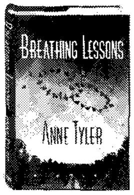
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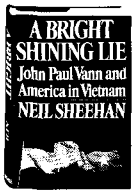
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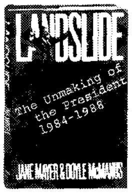
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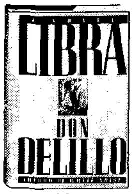
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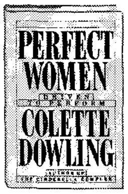
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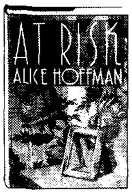
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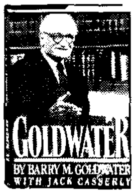
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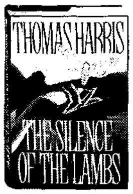
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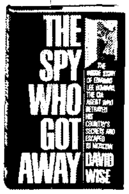
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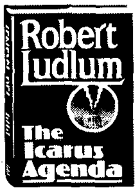
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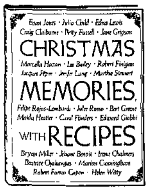
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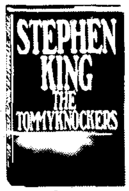
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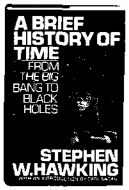
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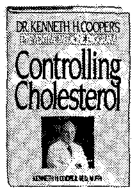
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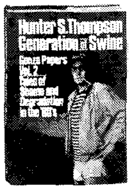
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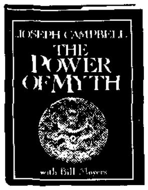
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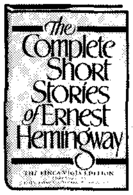
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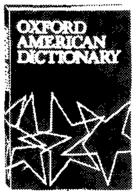
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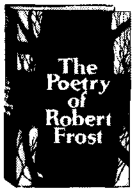
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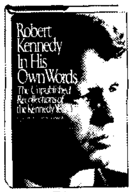
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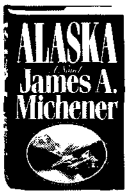
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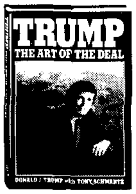
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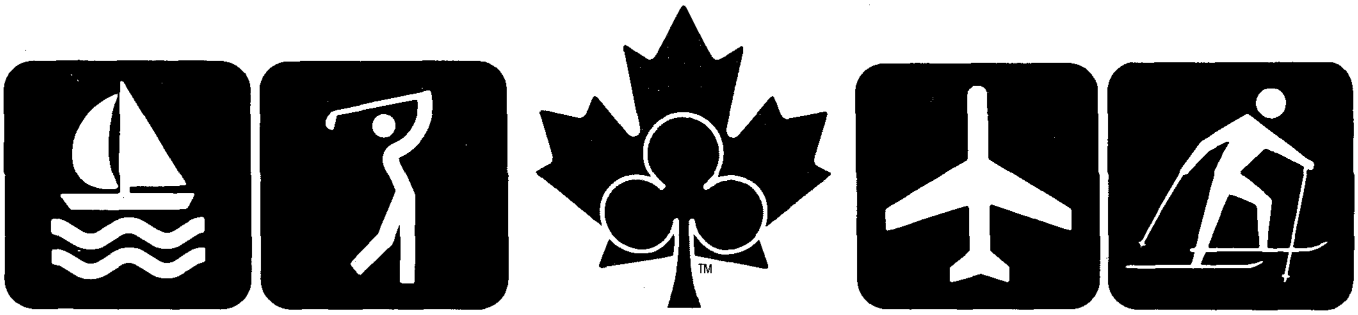

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